



NUMBER TWENTY

ONE DOLLAR

# PHOTON

ZOMBIES IN THE CINEMA • INTERVIEWS WITH LON CHANEY & JIM DANFORTH • WHITE ZOMBIE



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**PHOTON-** Number twenty published irregularly by MARK FRANK. Editorial offices located at 801 Avenue "C", Brooklyn, New York 11218. Available for one dollar, pubbed LoC, contribution or trade.

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**COVER-** Lon Chaney in his immortal characterization as THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA. From a painting by Dave Ludwig.

**BACK COVER-** Vassaria, mythical land of monsters and mayhem, finally made it. The imaginary travel poster held over from last issue showing the town from HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN. By Dave Ludwig.

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**IT IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD-** that the responsibility for the originality of all material sent to us is solely that of the contributor.

**STILL THIS ISSUE-** A rare behind-the-scenes look at the cast of WHITE ZOMBIES.

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#### DEDICATION

This issue is dedicated to CHRIS STEINBRUNNER for showing those great films on WOR/TV, for his convention parties, for being a devoted reader and a great guy.

#### ART CREDITS

Dave Ludwig: p. 5, 11, 13, 19, 27, 32, 36, 39, 40  
42, 46.  
Richard Corben: p. 2, 3, 21, 24.  
Bill Nelson: p. 6, 25.  
Dave Holman: p. 3. [cartoon]  
Ken Ralston: p. 23.  
Ken Lodge: p. 29.  
Bill Kaiser: p. 47.



## FRANKLY SPEAKING...

So much water has traveled under the proverbial bridge since the last issue of PHOTON was completed, that it's difficult to decide where to begin. The logical thing to do is apologize for the huge delay in getting this issue out. It seemed ill-fated from the beginning when the artists and writers simultaneously ran into difficulties that caused individual delays and then, finally, when I had assembled all the material, a series of unfortunate incidents (i.e. the damned typewriter broke down) stretched the interval even longer. But we finally made it and, contrary to popular opinion, PHOTON is alive and well in Brooklyn.

And there have been some changes made. The most obvious of these is the rather glaring fact that we have changed printers, the results of which we hope you will find more aesthetically pleasing. The decision to switch came at mid-stream, after more than half the layouts had been prepared for our former printer who employed a process that was considerably more restrictive with regard to the reproduction of drawings and photos. This will hopefully explain why we have apparently not taken full advantage of the new offset format. Next issue you can look forward to what we hope will be a more graphically exciting magazine, utilizing many more stills and displaying the talents of our artists in the best possible manner.

Changing printers put a huge strain on our budget, however, so we were forced to keep the issue down to 48 pages. This meant sacrificing much of what was planned and postponing other things until next time. Conspicuously absent is the lettercol and news section, which will be given priority in #21. Larry Richardson, Ron Borst, John Duval and David Soren had prepared a length in-depth survey of the current fantasy cinema after having been disillusioned with incompleteness of similar articles in other recent fanzines. They are revising it now for inclusion in our next issue. We had planned, also, to run an addenda to "The Vampire in the Cinema". Ron Borst's now-classic coverage of the Undead on the screen. This feature, which will appear next time, will contain additions and corrections to the Vampire Film Checklist that appeared in #19. Finally, the checklist of zombie pictures was squeezed out, and will also be run in #21.

So much for what isn't in this issue.

We're proud to present three exclusive interviews which we hope you will find interesting and informative. Gary Bortz's interview with Lou Chaney was conducted by mail, which explains its brevity and unfortunate lack of detail. The resurgence of interest in MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM gives added significance to both Scott MacQueen's feature on Glenda Farrell and Ron Borst's critique of the film. And we think you'll find what Jim Dunforth has to say about his career as a professional exorcist and special effects man to be as fascinating as the subject matter itself.

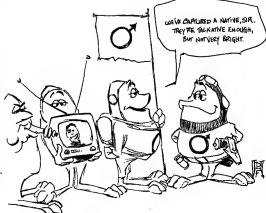
"The Vampire in the Cinema" would be a tough act to follow, and an impossible one to top. The many hours of dedicated research and painstaking attention to detail that made the article one of the finest film surveys ever published is currently going into a similar article concerning "Frankenstein" films. Between these two colossal assignments, Ron Borst chose to delve into a smaller sub-genre of the fantastic film...the "Zombie" picture. His history of the Zombie in film appears this issue; the checklist has been held over until next.

Our 42nd still this issue from WHITE ZOMBIE was generously supplied by Forrest J Ackerman. Incidentally, I would very much appreciate hearing from readers about the continuation of this special feature in future issues. Would you like us to continue to supply such a still with each issue? Do you feel it is unnecessary? Please let us hear from you.

A little controversy will hopefully be sparked by Don Dreyer's contribution, "Que Vada!" Don has been a science fiction and film fan for a good many years, but has only recently learned about fandom and fanzines. I believe he has stated, in non-fanzish terms, much of what fans have been griping about for years. In any event, you will be hearing more from Mr. Dreyer in future issues.

It would be difficult to predict exactly what will be in next issue at this point, since I've learned that the only predictable thing about fanzine publishing is its unpredictability. Things you can look forward to are Frank Dello Stritto's investigation into the Krieff/Lugosi phenomena, which studies the films these superstars together; Jim Wieroski's look at THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD, one of the finest science fiction films ever made; John Parnum's history of Fu Manchu on the screen; Ron Borst's review of THE OLD DARK HOUSE.

We're constantly changing and growing, but we need your help to do it. Please give us your support by subscribing but, even more important, we want to hear from you with suggestions, comments and criticism. Contributions of articles, artwork, stills, etc. will be gratefully accepted. See you soon.  
-Mark Frank-



# QUICK VAIS?

BY DON DREYER

Let me begin this brief commentary with a basic hypothesis: science fiction films are growing increasingly worse, while of novels and short stories become better.

What evidence can be presented to support this and, even if the hypothesis is correct, what possible reasons could there be for this rise in quality of writing / drop in quality of filmmaking?

To begin with, we must consider for a moment how we are going to define "science fiction." So as not to restrict ourselves to an unreasonably limited number of films and books, let us group those usually thought of as "fantasy" and "horror" films and literary efforts, as well as the more standard "science" sf, under the general heading of "science fiction."

It seems that there is ample evidence for the failure of recent sf flicks; of your three major sf genres only one, the hard-core scientific sf film, has produced worthwhile quality lately. Furthermore, even this latter genre is suffering from an ominous malaise: its emphasis on special photographic "space" effects and technological reality has already produced repetition. No matter how much you may have enjoyed *MARSHENED*, most sf aficionados will tell you that 2001 was, is, and always shall remain the real thing.

As for contemporary efforts at "horror" and "fantasy" films, these fall pitifully short of even the creaky old movies of the 30's & 40's. One has only to look at what they did with Poe's *THE YELLOW BOX* (and others) to understand how current filmmakers wreck classic stories of this type. No wonder that Poe was said to have been either stoned or labelled for a good part of his life -- he probably had a vivid enough imagination to get a mind's eye view of what would be done to some of his masterpiece.

There is a flick which is being released at just about the time of this writing called *NIGHT OF THE SLOUGH HORROR*, whose mere advertising bears witness to one of the chief faults of these films. Its ad print reads: "How much shock can you take?" The illustration reveals a drawing of one of those typically grotesque, bloody, and probably quite mad figures we've all too accustomed to. Oh yes, there's also a lovely young thing somewhere in there, writhing and screaming a la Fay Ray. And the masquerade continues.

I suspect that many of the films of past decade could hold their own with the present day chiller being what it is. At least the older flicks give the impression of being honestly done in the sense that they were still fairly experimental and thus subject to real audience scrutiny. Directors were interested in this kind of film as a new genre to capture the public's imagination rather than simple money-making devices. Despite all the supposed "horror" of the *FRANKENSTEIN* pictures, how much blood and monster-making for the own sake was there in contrast to today's attempts at bringing the audience the best in cheap, blood-curdling color?

As far as the aforementioned hard-core sf film is concerned, we're at a difficult stage for many reasons. First, "speculative" such as 2001 are extremely costly and, of course, difficult to make. Add to this the previously noted factor of repetition and the arduous task of trying to outdo the granddaddy and you're left with a major hassle. Secondly, we're at a stage where the old, rocket-to-the-moon-whereupon-commander-saves-girl-from-monster bit just doesn't make it anymore. We need to explicate this further; hopefully (or, on second thought, maybe not so hopefully) you've seen enough of these to know why their potential has been exhausted. (Mind you, I did use the word potential -- I do feel that there was at one time a place for pictures like this as if they were *FROM SPACESHIP*, *FIRST SPACESHIP ON VENUS*, etc.). Furthermore, we've reached a point where, on the one hand, the best of literature does today examine certain psychological and sociological elements of man within the science fiction context, while on the other, filmmakers historically fall short of accurately and effectively reproducing these

comparatively intangible qualities on celluloid. When it comes to the technological problems of special effects photography, things work out well as often as not, but where as producers and directors are given the task of bringing to the screen social and emotional problems, the result usually consists of corn-ball one-liners or overdone shock value.

Another area where science fiction has often fallen flat on its face (and occasionally with a crash) is in the actual representation of its "monsters". In an article entitled "Them or Us" written for the April 1970 issue of *Show Magazine*, popular sf writer Marlan Ellison elaborated on this point by noting that the characteristic "giant ant" portrayed in several monster flicks is, in reality, a physical impossibility due to a phenomenon known as the Inverse Cube Law, which states that as the total size or strength of a material is brought to the second power (doubled), its weight is increased to the third power (cubed). That is to say, our mighty ant towering above the puny humans would fall right on its collective mandibles if this situation were to occur in real life.

Ellison goes on to say that it is this kind of "unscientific research" that rests as "one of the basic reasons why Hollywood has never known what to do with science fiction, why its product has been so deleterious to the reputation of sf, and why a revolutionary kind of informed thinking must come into being before we will see films of fantasy that begin to approach the quality of early experiments in the field."

Paradoxically, when we shift our focus to modern sf writing, we see a complete reversal of form. Even without taking into account the always-solid efforts of established writers such as Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury and Theodore Sturgeon, there is a great deal of strength in recent efforts by some of the newer authors. Surely Robert Merle's *The Day of the Dolphin*, Michael Crichton's *The Andromeda Strain*, and several exceptional short stories flowing constantly from the pages of the ever-popular anthologies reinforce confidence and give hope to those of us who feel strongly that there is a very significant form of contemporary literature.

Although the two novels mentioned above, both of which were high on recent best-selling charts, are supposedly being readied for film production some time in the near future, it is amazing how many fine sf novels and short stories are not used as material for flicks or, if they are, seem to die from mass distortion of the original story.

Certainly efforts such as Asimov's tremendous *Foundation* trilogy, with all of its political/sociological implications, would be a good test for some creative filmmaker. Arthur C. Clarke is another whose novels (with the one major exception of 2001) have not been fully considered for their potential screen value.

The anthologies provide us with some first-rate stories that also go by the names *science fiction*. Some outstanding examples of recent work in this area that could (and should) be considered for the wide screen include Clifford Simak's *Shadow Show*, a short story dealing with the psychological problems encountered by a scientific research team attempting to artificially create life while on an isolated planet light-years from earth, and Larry Niven's *Death by Humanity*, which deals with a strange human "uplift" to the future and the consequences of organ transplants.

There is, then, a great number of stories to consider for potential movie-making. How can we get the Hollywood movie moguls to change their ways and produce films that achieve the quality of contemporary sf writing? The two obvious possibilities of letter-writing campaigns and boycotting poor films do not offer much hope. But neither can we simply sit back and pray that filmmakers get tired of the trash that they're creating and hope that, by sudden inspiration, these same producers & directors soon begin working on some sophisticated, truly creative science fiction.

Suggestions, anyone?

# GLEND FAIRRELL

Scott MacQueen interviews the "Wax Museum" co-star



Loebco - N.Y.

The name of Fay Wray will always be synonymous with horror films. Among fans of the fantastic genre, Elsa Lancaster will forever be known as the Bride of Frankenstein. But Glenda Farrell will never find herself nominated as a queen of horror films, or even a runner-up to that title. Her place in the cinema is most notably of a less gruesome, but decidedly underkissed type. On celluloid she will always be a gun moll in the company of Little Caesar, or the estranged girl friend of Paul Muni, the most infamous fugitive from the most notorious chain gang.

Although her fame in the cinema fantastique is not widespread - minuscule, in fact - she has her own little niche in MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM. The mystery surrounding the MUSEUM is explained elsewhere in this issue. Suffice it to say here that the discovery of a print of this film is perhaps the most sensational cinematic find of the last several years.

Glenda Farrell portrayed Florence Dempsey, an intrepid, "hard boiled" girl reporter (that was Warner's publicity line for her) who suspects Ivan Igor (Lionel Atwill) of various nefarious deeds. Her insatiable curiosity found her crawling in and out of musty basement windows, snooping around the dark museum after hours and, on one occasion, nearly treated to a swim in Igor's bubbling wax cauldron.

Recently, I was honored to discuss with Miss Farrell her role in the 1933 shocker. As our discussion progressed, I pulled out an aging copy of "Famous Monsters of Filmland" which featured the unmasked face of Ivan Igor as a centerfold. Memories of long hours of waiting beside Mr. Atwill on the set - while he was in full make-up - were evident in her reactions. She can't see how anyone can bear to look at such gruesome things! Perhaps Warner Brothers' campaign for Miss Farrell was entirely wrong. She is not the least bit tough or "hard boiled", but actually a most sensitive and gracious woman.

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**PHOTON:** MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM was quite a film for it's day. I believe it set records due to the fact that it employed technicolor and some truly fabulous sets.

**MISS FARRELL:** Yes, it was done on a tremendous sound stage. They took the whole stage which usually handles five or six pictures at once! It was built so that, when they did the burning scene, no other sets would be damaged during the burning of all those wax figures. It was a very interesting scene to see, particularly the fire. They had to burn all of these wax figures which were made right there at the studio and which also had taken a lot of work at an art gallery. And they had to do it all in one take because it couldn't be done again.

**PHOTON:** Is it true that the lighting of the sets was so intense that it constantly liquified the wax dummies?

**MISS FARRELL:** Well, that's right. The figures and the people! In the days when that was made, they were still using klieg lights, and it was done in color which is, of course, much more intense and hot than black-and-white. So we were all almost melted! The wax figures did melt, but they put them back together again. Actually, it was such a hot set that it bothered the actors' eyes. The reason that actors wear dark glasses is not because they don't want to be recognized, but because the light is so intense when you work in color films. And in those days it was so intense that your tolerance for light was gone. That's why you see them running around in dark glasses. Not because they think it's chic; they can't tolerate light. That happened particularly to the actors who worked every day under those bright lights.

**PHOTON:** What was Lionel Atwill's scarred face truly like under his waxen mask?

**MISS FARRELL:** It was a frightening make-up! It took about 4 or 5 hours to get on every morning. I know he [Atwill] had to be up around 3 o'clock every morning and at the studio. Most actors are usually alright getting there at 6, but he had to be there 'way ahead of time. The make-up took so long, it was a sort of rubber mask that they had to make and put over him, but it had to have breathing holes and things in it. It was a frightening thing.

I know I used to sit while we were waiting our turn to go in front of the camera...I couldn't bear to look at him it was so frightening. We all had nightmares about him. It was a dreadful make-up - dreadful from the standpoint of horror. But he was a darling man and it didn't seem to bother him.

**PHOTON:** Was the actual unmasking scene really as terrifying as it's reputed to be?

**MISS FARRELL:** Well, that's acting. Looking at him, at this horror make-up, was pretty gruesome.

**PHOTON:** In a "Today" TV show interview, Fay Wray stated that she had no idea what Atwill's make-up looked like, except that it would be "a little scary", and when she broke the mask she was shocked.

**MISS FARRELL:** I think she was pleasantly shocked when she cracked it to see a handsome man!

**PHOTON:** What kind of an actor was Lionel Atwill to work with?

**MISS FARRELL:** He was a darling man, just wonderful and very patient. You have to sit around and wait, you know, to work under those hot lights. You rehearse for hours and hours. It's grueling and not all the glasses that it's cracked up to be. It's really hard work.

**PHOTON:** And Fay Wray?

**MISS FARRELL:** She's a lovely girl, wonderful. I didn't have too many scenes with her. I played the girl reporter and most of my scenes were with the dummies and with Frank McHugh.

**PHOTON:** But you had scenes with Mr. Atwill?

**MISS FARRELL:** Oh, I know him. We all know each other well. I had a couple of scenes with him. I just don't recall them now. I had some scenes where I confronted him, because I'm the one who discovered what the museum was. He used live bodies. So it was quite a horror picture in those days, I think it

(Continued on page 47)



Russell screened a beautiful color print that very afternoon. Whether or not this was the same Jack Warner print is not currently known.

The mystery reached its climax when West Coast fans were able to screen the Jack Warner print this past summer. Easterners had to wait a bit longer, until September 26, when the film was shown once in New York City. Horror buffs were in profusion, yet when the film concluded, the general consensus was that film was less than the legend had built up over the years.

MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM opens in London in 1931. There is the usual stormy night as the camera pans to a sign simply labeled, "Wax Museum." We travel slowly into the wax-works to rest on the bearded, benign face of Ivan Igor (Atwill). Igor is engaged in working on the facial features of still another wax creation. Two well-dressed gentlemen arrive to disturb Igor's work, but his insistence soon vanishes

Of the many horror film classics from the early thirties which have continually eluded film collectors over the years, none have achieved the prominence of the Warner Brothers-First National release of 1933, MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM. Even though such films as THE OLD DARK HOUSE, the 1926 THE MAGICIAN, Browning's THE UNKNOWN, THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND of '25, Murnau's DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, CHANDU THE MAGICIAN, SEVEN FOOTPRINTS TO SATAN, and THE GHOU were all thought to be lost, slowly but surely they have come to light once more. Such is the case with MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM.

William K. Everson, renowned author and film historian, reminisced back in 1948 about the rare horror production in the 18th issue of Screen Facts magazine. In that article he presented a survey of rare films recently discovered, and listed those (i.e. LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT) which were presumably lost. He also gave a history of the mystery surrounding MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM. He revealed that what was then (1948) suspected to have been the last original color print, one which was last shown in the late forties in England, had been destroyed in 1934 because it had begun to decompose. And although he pointed out that a rumor would have a battered black and white print still existing behind the iron curtain, he was seemingly unaware of certain facts which have only recently come to light.

This news took the form of an article in the June 17, 1978 number of Variety, in which it was stated that an original color print of MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM had been located in the personal collection of the former head of Warner Brothers, Jack L. Warner. Moreover, immediate steps for its preservation would soon commence, and the most optimistic news was that United Artists TV (which owns the television rights) had made a color print for future television screenings!

Another odd note turned up in the August 12th number of the same publication, when famed gothic writer Ray Russell revealed in a letter to the editor (commenting on the June 17th article) that, as far as he was concerned, the picture had never been lost to begin with! While working at Warner's in 1964, Russell was engaged in developing a TV series based on the remake of MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM, the 1953 HOUSE OF WAX. In his research, Russell requested a screening of both films, and a phone call to the vaults "uncovered it in short order".

when he recognizes a patron friend's face at the doorway. The friend has brought another, and Igor's work so stuns him that he promises that he will submit the creations to the Royal Academy upon his return from an Egyptian excavation. Igor is astounded, and after the two men leave he turns to his creations, Voltaire and his masterpieces. As he settles, to tell his "children" his delight, Igor has little time to relish his glory, as his business partner, a fat, lecherous man named Joe Worth (Edwin Maxwell) arrives to tell him that he is upset about his investment of 15,000 pounds in the exhibit, and believes that the only possible way to recoup his losses is to collect the fire insurance. Before Atwill can stop him, Worth has set fire to the dummies. Worth knocks him out and, as the wax figures melt hideously, leaves the museum, locking the door behind him.

Twelve years pass. It is New Year's Eve in New York City, 1932. From a room above the crowded Broadway streets Ivan Igor, apparently unharmed by the conflagration many years earlier, watches the joyous celebration below.

The scene shifts to the city morgue. Two attendants wheel in the body of a woman. As they are about to depart, the supposedly dead figure rises from beneath the white sheet. One of the attendants laughingly explains that the embalming fluid is the cause and, pushing the corpse down, leaves the room with his friend. As they leave, another corpse rises to reveal itself as a living, horribly burned figure. Stepping from the slab, it places a wide-brimmed hat on its scarred head and hobbles about in search of a particular corpse. It pauses in front of the woman's body just wheeled in and, wrapping it in its sheet, uses a rope to lower it to the street below through the window, where two men are waiting to receive it.

In the office of a large Metropolitan paper, the Editor (Frank McHugh) informs his wise-cracking femme reporter, Florence Dempsey (Glenda Farrell) that she's out of a job unless she brings in a story for the next edition. Flo goes to the morgue to witness the autopsy of Joan Gale, reputedly a suicide. Doctor Rasmussen orders the body brought out, but the attendants find it mysteriously stiff. Flo rushes back to give the scoop to her editor. Meanwhile, the dead girl's former lover, playboy Harold Winton (Thomas Gordon), has been jailed by the

police who suspect him for Joan's murder and of having the body stolen to prevent an autopsy. Flo goes to his cell and attempts to borrow his spirits, and she feels that the body ties to the disappearance of other corpses in New York in the last 18 months.

While the case continues to mystify the press and police, Ivan Igor is supervising the last minute preparations of the new wax museum he has built on 14th Street. Young Ralph Burton (Allen Vincent) is a sculptor working under Igor's supervision and, while Igor is criticizing his work, it is revealed that his hands were horribly burned in the fire in the old museum and he can no longer create. "It is a cruel irony that you people without souls should have hands," he tells Burton. Another of Igor's sculptors is Otto (Matthew Betz), an ugly, mentally retarded mute who shapes every facial image into the likeness of his own features. The third sculptor is the mysterious Professor D'Arcy, the only one of the trio upon whom Igor lavishes praise for his creative work in wax. Today, the Professor has brought in his latest work, a life-sized model of Joan of Arc, which strongly resembles the features of the late Joan Gale.

That evening, as Ralph is finishing his work for the day, his girlfriend, Charlotte Duncan (Fay Roy), accompanied by her roommate, the wide-cracking Florence, takes him out to the museum. As Ralph and Charlotte converse, Flo steals into the museum where she almost immediately recognizes the facial resemblance of Joan of Arc to the supposed suicide victim. As she is examining the statue, Igor comes up in his wheelchair to inform her that, since the waxworks is not yet open to the public, she must leave at once. He sees her to the door and first catches sight of the beautiful Charlotte. He envisages his Marie Antoinette in the features of Miss Duncan, and has Ralph introduce him at once. While Igor is thus occupied, Florence once more examines the Joan of Arc figure. This time she discovers the morgue slip identifying the body of Joan Gale, and pockets it. She climbs up to feel the face of the waxwork, not noticing that a hand has reached in to retrieve the evidence in her pocket. Flo returns to the other room and gives them all to the opening of the museum that evening.

That night, after telling her Editor that she believes it was Igor who stole Joan Gale's body in order to create a death-mask of her features for the Joan of Arc figure, Flo phones Harold Winton, who is out of jail on bail. She tells him to pick her up later that evening.

The gala opening of the waxworks that night is hardly a success. Only a few patrons are in attendance to hear Igor tell the history of the figures he has immortalized. During a slight lull, Professor D'Arcy informs Igor that he has noticed Joe Worth, the murderous partner who had disappeared after the destruction of the original museum, who is now engaged in the bootlegging racket.

Florence notices the Professor suspiciously slinking away from the crowd and, rushing outside, meets Winton. The two follow the sculptor to an old dilapidated house. This is Worth's headquarters and, after D'Arcy enters, she courageously leaves Winton and crawls in a cellar window. There she creeps around looking for a clue, when suddenly she hears the sound of someone approaching. Hiding behind some barrels, she watches mutely as the same horribly scarred hobbling figure moves slowly towards her from the stairs. It slowly pushes a coffin-like box across the room and then leaves by the same way it came. Florence rushes from the house to Winton's car, proceeding at once to her Editor's office. With the police as escort, she returns to the old house and, ultimately, arrives again in the basement.

"Can you give me a description of this person you saw?" one of the officers asks.

"No. Well, not a very good one, I guess. But it wasn't like anything human and...and it hobbled and swayed like a monkey. And the face," she gasps, "...it was like an African war mask!"

"You mean he was colored?"

"I don't know what he was, but he made Frankenstein look like a lily!"

The police open the box and find that it contains bootleg whiskey, and not a corpse. Professor D'Arcy is apprehended and tells them that it is the work of a man named Worth, whom Winton identifies as his bootlegger.

Later, in the Captain of Police's office, Professor D'Arcy, alias Sparrow, is discovered not only to be a dope addict, but the possessor of a watch inscribed with the name Judge Ramsey, one of the missing corpses! The police begin to sweat the information out of him, but it is a long, arduous business.

The next morning, Charlotte arrives at the Wax Museum to meet Ralph. She enters, but her sweetheart is not in sight. Instead, she is startled by Otto who innocently frightens her. Igor appears and tells her that Ralph is in the basement. As she proceeds down into the cellar, the doors are locked behind her, and Igor meets her at the bottom of the steps by another way. As he is about to show her around, she offers to aid him with his crutches.

"You'll help me give back to the world my masterpiece...Marie Antoinette!" he explains, rising without the aid of his crutches.

Back at the police station, Sparrow can no longer stand the strain and confesses everything; that Ramsey was killed because he looked like Voltaire, that it was Igor who murdered them and that it was his job to keep track of Igor's former partner, Worth. He says the whole place is a morgue, with the bodies of Igor's victims covered with wax! Meanwhile, Igor slowly moves toward Charlotte, explaining that she should not be afraid of immortality. As he draws near to clutch her, she smashes on against his face, which cracks away. It is a waxen mask covering the fire-scarred monster's face beneath. Shocked beyond words, she screams out.

"You fiend!"

"You must not say that to me," protests Igor in agony, but she screams out the words once more.

"No! There was a fiend! of that you may be sure. There was a fiend! And this is what he did to me!" he gestures towards his pitiful features.

"You did this!" Igor exclaims, moving toward a large, upraised case. "For twelve years...twelve awful years this terrible living dead man with these burnt hands and face has searched for this fiend, and opening the case, Joe Worth's lifeless form is here!"

"This is here!" proclaims a triumphant Igor.

His explanations over, Igor fastens the helplessly Charlotte to a table beneath a large boiling vat of liquid wax. When the wax reaches a certain height and temperature, it will overflow through a glass tube covering the girl with wax.

Upstairs, Florence and the police arrive just in time. Breaking into the basement workshop of the insane Igor, they hear his plans of re-creating Marie Antoinette at the last moment. He rushes up the stairs to the catwalks which are just above the vat to fight them off, but in the end is sent hurtling into the boiling death, as Charlotte is saved moments before the liquid death boils over onto the spot where she was confined.

The final scene unfolds in the Editor's office. It seems that Florence's plan of marrying a millionaire are about to come true, as Harold Winton has asked her to marry him. But Florence finds her true happiness with her own boss, who claims her for his own bride.

Contemporary critics lavished little or no praise upon MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM. Certainly there were no comments the likes of which the legend built up over the years since the film initially appeared in February of 1933.

John S. Cohen, reviewer for The New York Sun, made no secret of his dislike of horror films when he stated: "If you still like horror films it may interest you mildly. For a horror film, THE [sic] MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM unquestionably possesses a sufficiently imaginative macabre idea. Its fault is that it is a bit clumsily plotted. The suspense is, therefore, occasionally lacking. Its virtue is that, pictorially, waxworks are interesting. And as previously stated, it will serve as a mildly entertaining program time killer -- if you like the type. It isn't quite mine."

Time was likewise critical: "Connoisseurs of mystery fiction may well despise THE [sic] MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM because it breaks the rule that everything must be explained at the finish. Otherwise, its garish ramifications should be pleasantly exciting."

Irene Thirer in The New York Daily News gave a more favorable account, although she gave it only

\* two and a half star rating. "Sure enough, this one, adapted from Charles Beiden's story is a shocker. Director Michael Curtis makes an obvious endeavor to keep audiences' toes a-tinkling. And how he succeeds!"

From The New York American: "This one may serve to drive the same man from the bedsides of the more timid and credulous kiddies, but as a motion picture catering to an adult audience, it is an absurd and tedious film of the thriller-chiller school. For what material is at hand, Michael Curtis does a good directorial job."

The Los Angeles Times critic said: WAX MUSEUM may trail along with FRANKENSTEIN as a thriller, but quite as good, but a pretty acceptable diversification of this kind. If anything, the mechanical devices of the picture are better than FRANKENSTEIN."

Martin Dickstein of The Brooklyn Daily Eagle fell into the same opinion as John Cohen Jr., when he stated: "There are some pretty awful goings-on at the Manhattan Strand Theater, where THE [sic] MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM began its tempest last night. It seems that there is a slightly bony old sculptor who takes a keen delight in pilfering corpses from the city morgue for the purpose of treating them with a velvety wax veneer and mounting them in his wax museum. This is not a new idea in horror pictures. We remember having seen something of the sort several months ago in a murder mystery film whose title we have forgotten. It continues to be, however, a suitably gruesome trick for this (we hope) horror picture to end all horror pictures."

Thornton Delashant of The New York Evening Post said this: "THE [sic] MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM tries terribly hard to be spooky. It even shows you the inside of a morgue, with a lot of dead feet sticking out from under the sheets. In spite of its intensiveness on the macabre, it never achieves anything but a wax-like imitation of horror. The newspaper scenes are filled with painfully unfunny dialogue, so that even such good actors as Glenda Farrell and Frank McHugh are made to seem bad. The picture, incidentally, is photographed in Technicolor, which leaves it about where it would have been in black and white."

Finally, Richard Watts, Jr. in The New York Herald Tribune said that the sequence in which Fay Wray smashes Atwill's mask struck him as being "a scene considerably more unpleasant than any-

thing in the much-criticized FREAKS." Watts agreed with most of the others that the actors did as well with the material as they could possibly do.

After its initial release in 1933, MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM drifted into the obscurity which befell so many other films, horror or otherwise. The original reviews were quickly forgotten, and as the output of truly imaginative and great gothic pictures subsided and died by 1936, the picture's importance and stature grew. By the end of the '30's, when the original Universal products were televised, the older horror films took on more prominence and MYSTERY was remembered as one of the original greats. Photographs in the professional "monster magazines" only intensified the desire of all to resurrect the picture. When the film failed to live up to what had been said about it, an illusion was shattered.

MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM was not actually an original film in the same sense that many of the other early films, such as THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME, KING KONG, FREAKS and WHITE ZOMBIE had been. Everyone had always known that both HOUSE OF WAX and the pilot for the projected television series that failed (which, of course, saw release theatrically as CHAMBER OF HORRORS in 1960) were derived from the 1933 production. The real surprise came only with the viewing of MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM, a screening which revealed that the "original" was, in many cases, little more than a reworking of Warner's earlier film of 1932, DOCTOR X.

DOCTOR X was to Warner Brothers what DRACULA had been to Universal. It was their first horror film of the early thirties, and the first all-talking film of its kind photographed in color. Michael Curtis was selected to direct from a script penned by Earl Baldwin and Robert Tasker, which was in turn an adaptation of the stage play DOCTOR X, written by Howard Warren Constock and Allen C. Miller, and performed on the New York stage in 1931. Atwill and Wray essayed the major roles, as Doctor X (wired) and heroine, respectively, while Lee Tracy was cast as the cocky reporter here. Preston Foster played one of the suspects who turns out to be the villain in the final reel.

The similarity of DOCTOR X and MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM lies in individual sequences, methods of developing atmosphere and storyline, and in the utilization of not only the same actors, but the same technicians as well. In both cases, Ray Hennahan photographed the proceedings (with Richard Tower in the former picture); Satou Grot designed the settings; George Amy edited.

Both films have early key scenes laid in the city morgue. In DOCTOR X, Atwill as Xavier is examining the latest victim of the "Moon Killer." As he leaves, reporter Lee Tracy rises from beneath the sheets on a slab. MYSTERY had a similar sequence, utilizing the same morgue setting. Both films had the attendants (which could well have been played by the same uncredited actors) wheel in a body, have another corpse rise, and follow with an explanation that it is the embalming fluid which makes them rise as they do.

The two movies, photographed in the early Technicolor process as they were, developed their own type of atmosphere in the same manner. As about five times the amount of light was needed to film color sequences at this time, there are exceptionally few dark and brooding scenes used to heighten the suspense in either.

There are an over-abundance of comic interludes in both films, which tends to put a heavy burden on the director to sustain some degree of suspense. The jokes are contemporary patter delivered by a newspaper reporter in both cases, and all the characters must act as straight men for this type of dialogue, until a point is reached (in MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM) where Glenda Farrell bids goodbye to Ivan Iger with a curt, "So long, Pop. See you in jail!" It is an amusing line, but doesn't help the audience to take the film more seriously. In both films the humor gets way out of hand.

Both DOCTOR X's "Moon Killer" and the fire-scarred Iger are the same basic villain. Both are bizarrely conceived madmen who creep and hobble around, half beat over most of the time, dressed in long black coats. In both films, their appearances seldom serve any real importance except to horrify. Even their deaths are similar.



Production still from MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM. Michael Curtis (in dark suit) peers through camera at Fay Wray.



What it all comes down to is that if one has screened DOCTOR X, then one may safely judge MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM in the same category. One is hardly above the other in quality, and the superior film is only a matter of personal opinion. The fact that a legend surrounds the latter film, that it has been a so-called "lost" film for so long, hardly qualifies it to be rated superior.

Of the film's definite assets, the greatest is, of course, Lionel Atwill. More specifically, the makeup he wore as the fire-scarred monster is magnificent. It is seemingly more terrifying than Vincent Price's makeup in the remake. But, again, this is a very close comparison! Atwill handles the part with great restraint in the opening reel which is entirely satisfactory in gaining the sympathy his character deserves. Unfortunately, the climactic scenes appear a bit too sympathetic, watering down the menacing quality of the role. This is the fault of the script, and not the actor, as Atwill's performances in THE VAMPIRE BAT and especially as the jealous husband in MURDERS IN THE DOG more than displayed his talents in presenting totally demonic villains. It might be interesting to note that although the makeup for Werner Klemperer in Universal's 1945 DARK INTRODUCTION is different in the closeups, the character of the long short remains the same. It is created perfectly, down to the same kind of hat and scraggly hair and the peculiar hobbling walk. Perc Westmore, who created Atwill's makeup, is a member of the famous Westmore family of makeup artists (Bud Westmore handled DARK INTRODUCTION). In all, the role is one of Atwill's best, but not up to his performances in either MURDERS IN THE DOG or SON OF FRANKENSTEIN, and there is little doubt that one could make a case of comparing many of his other roles to Ivan Igor.

It's quite strange that while comedy noticeably dominated and hurt MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM, today Glenda Farrell's comic heroine is still quite amusing and, if one does not care for well-developed atmospheres, she can well be considered one of the best things about the picture. Some of her lines, such as "I'll make you eat dirt, you soap bubble!" to her editor are magnificently funny, and her performance bears the wear of time as much more than Lee Tracy's in DOCTOR X.

The rest of the cast ranges from very good to adequate. Fay Wray was, of course, the epitome of femininity in the early horror films. MYSTERY was called upon to do a little but look beautiful and give out with one of her marvelous screams here and there, which Glenda Farrell handled most of the important lines. Nevertheless, she managed to compete as an equal with her femme co-star. Frank McHugh, Allen Vincent and Gavin Gordon handled the roles of the heroes. McHugh's sequences were all filmed in the newspaper offices, and he did all of them in one day. A Sunday, between pictures. Allen Vincent is barely adequate as Fay Wray's love-sick sweetheart, and Gavin Gordon, who later played Lord Byron in BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, was the playboy millionaire.

The supporting villains included Arthur Edmund Carewe, Edwin Maxwell and Matthew Betts. The first was cast in roles of a more sinister nature, connected parts of importance in the silent THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (as the Persian) and in the 1923 First National version of TAILIN (as Svengali). In MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM he played another red herring, as he had in DOCTOR X. Always listed in cast lists as "Sparron" he was continually referred to as Professor B in the film itself. Edwin Maxwell, fat and lecherous, was well cast in the role of Joe Worth, and although he is the most mysterious figure in the picture, his presence lends to the air of suspense. Matthew Betts played Otto (not Hugo as all the cast lists indicated), the mute and ugly servant of the mad sculptor, the role called for little but grunts and screams and a sinister face, but Betts was able to fill the bill.

In 1935, Warner Brothers somewhat revived the ending of MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM in another horror film, the rarely discussed Robert Florey picture, THE FLORENTINE DAGGER. Ben Hecht's script led as its central character an imaginary descendant of the infamous Cesare Borgia. Young Juan (Donal Woods) is a young man who is completely obsessed with the idea that he must follow the family tradition by turning murderer. Not wishing

to harm anyone, Cesare decides that he will both start and end his murderous career by destroying himself, but an old physician visiting at the castle (Dr. Aubrey Smith) persuades Juan to lead himself off his obsessions by writing a play about his family. The play is purchased by Victor Ballau (Henry O'Neill), a Viennese playwright, and produced in Vienna with great success. Juan falls in love with Ballau's daughter, Florence (Margaret Lindsay), and goes to Ballau to ask his consent for the marriage. Ballau refuses, and that night Juan is murdered by an unknown assassin; stabbed with a fluted dagger that had previously hung on the wall as an ornament. Cesare and Florence are accused of the murder, but old Doctor Lytton helps the young man locate the real murderer, whose fire-scarred face had been hidden by a wax mask for many years. The climax is staged in...a mask-maker's shop!

The question must sooner or later arise, of course, as to how the 1933 MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM compares with the 1953 remake in 3-D, HOUSE OF WAX? Or, going one step further, how does it compare with the 1966 CHAMBER OF HORRORS? The latter question can be dismissed quickly, since only the utilization of the museum set from HOUSE OF WAX links the two films. The first question is complicated by the prejudice which seems to have cropped up in favor of the first film, even with people who have not seen it! I was firmly convinced that the original would prove to be the better of the two before I screened it, not realizing the very close similarity that existed between the first version and DOCTOR X. Had I known I might have felt differently, for after seeing MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM, the primary feeling is that HOUSE OF WAX is not only a better film from every conceivable standpoint, but that HOUSE OF WAX is a truly underrated film for the most part as well.

First of all, the films are surprisingly alike. Any ideas one might hold of the films approaching development of atmosphere or horror through totally different methods (as in the case of related films like NOSFERATU, A SYMPHONY OF TERROR and DRACULA or HORROR OF DRACULA) can be entirely dismissed. Both strive for their effects through similar clichés (black-garbed villains, weird sets, hideous faces, etc.) and, when they are compared, HOUSE OF WAX is easily the better of the two.

Both films have a more or less similar opening. While the '33 film is set in London in 1911, the remake begins in New York at the turn of the century. The camera shots are somewhat similar in composition; each opens with a shot of the exterior of the waxworks, then slowly drifts in and pans about the wax statues as if the camera were a casual observer. In this, HOUSE OF WAX is superior, for while MYSTERY merely panned about innocently-staged wax studies, the remake paused to dwell on some rather bizarre props. Of course, HOUSE OF WAX had an admirable score composed by David Buttolph which aided in every one of the film's key points, and was never obtrusive. The two gentlemen arrive as they did in the first version and are met by a benign Vincent Price who plays the Atwill character under the name of Henry Worth (a name more fitting than "Ivan Igor", as "Igor" had been over-used throughout the years). They express their admiration of Jarrod's work, and exchange much the same sort of dialogue (Jarrod speaks of his John Wilkes Booth in such the same manner as Igor spoke of his Voltaire). The men depart, and the villainous partner, Matthew Burke, turns up, this time played by Roy Roberts. Roberts is not the physically lecherous type that Edwin Maxwell was, but the character development is such that he is Maxwell's equal. Roberts, too, wants to collect the fire insurance and starts a fire. Price tries to stop him (in a fight sequence much more exciting than the one in 1933) but is at last pushed into the very blaze itself (implying, as the first film did not, that he dies). The burning of the wax images is far more exciting with music, and the latter film dwells longer on the horrendous proceedings.

Up to this point, both films are identical for the most part. Here is where Crane Wilbur's script begins to differ from the Mullally-Briceon version. Wilbur dispenses with the drawn out and useless New Year's celebration opening his scene in the same New York City. A few scant weeks or months later the evil partner is having dinner with a beautiful but dumb blonde (Carolyn Jones). He has just col-

lected the insurance money and goes to his office safe late that evening to withdraw it. There the horribly scarred Jarrod, clad in the proper villainous black, throttles him and throws his body down an elevator shaft.

Shortly afterwards, Sue Allen (Phyllis Kirk) returns to her apartment to discover her roommate, the same blonde girl Cathy Grant, dead in bed with the horrible figure lurking in a corner. She flees out the window and runs down the cobbled streets in an immensely chilling scene where she is chased by Price to her boyfriend's home (Paul Picerni). Sue's roommate's body is later taken to the morgue, where the same attendant's display occurs. Price rises from the sheets and lowers the corpse down to the waiting helpers below in a scene lifted directly from the original.

Hoping for a lead to both the murder and body snatching, the police arrive to question Sue and the other hero, Police Lieutenant Tom Brennan (Frank Lovejoy), is introduced.

Again the remake departs from the original, as one of the men originally interested in the waxworks turns up and helps to finance the new museum. The deformed sculptor has two servants, the muttish brute (Charles Buchinsky Bronson) who is appropriately named Igor, and Ned Young as the alcoholic Leon Averill. "Madame" has "M" Young as a good actor, but not the deliciously melodramatic actor that Carrow was.

Jarrold opens his waxworks once more for the public, this time giving them the shock exhibits he previously despised. Thus, the tour in HOUSE OF WAX is far more interesting than the tame goings on in MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM. This time, Phyllis Kirk takes over the femme parts split between Glenda Farrell and Fay Wray. It is she who suspects that the body of Cathy Grant has been used in the making of Joan of Arc, and her whom Jarrod identifies as his past Marie Antoinette.

In the final reel Miss Kirk arrives at the museum late one night to search for her lover. There, in the dark and very frightening atmosphere, Igor manages to lock her in. Jarrod appears, and when he rises out of his chair it is a much more chilling sequence than when Atwill stood with hardly a nod. Similarly, the face-breaking scene is much more horrible. Music, suspenseful buildup and magnificent magnificent magnificence in the best appearance in a film of this type to date) all make it considerably more successful.

The subsequent scenes in the cellar are hardly as elaborate as those spacious and gloriously erected settings in the first version, but the dialogue and the revealing of a totally-issane Price has a more chilling effect than the climax to the original.

To summarize, then, MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM is not really an original film itself; it borrows heavily in its development from the earlier DOCTOR X. Secondly, though I still regard the picture as one of the better horror film I've seen from that era, I cannot rate the film as the best appearance in a majority of other greats from its own time period (i.e. WHITE ZOMBIE, THE BLACK CAT, THE RAVEN, FRANKENSTEIN, DRACULA, THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME, FREAKS, DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, KING KONG, THE OLD DARK HOUSE, THE MUMMY or THE MASK OF FU MANCHU). It is, however, superior to such films as MURDERS IN THE MIND, SUBVERSIVE, THE WAMPYRE, BLACK ETC. What comes with the re-discovery of MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM is the end of a glorious legend, and an immense new respect for HOUSE OF WAX, which takes the best portions of the original and develops a far more exciting and suspenseful picture. By all means see the original, but you will probably agree that you have already seen the better version.

Following is a credits/cast listing on the five principle films discussed:

DOCTOR X 1932  
Warner Brothers-First National. 80 minutes.  
In Technicolor; Directed by Michael Curtiz; Screenplay by Adaption by Earl Baldwin & Robert Tasker; Based on the stage play of the same title by Howard W. Coststock & Allen C. Miller; Photographed by Richard Tower & Ray Remanah; Art Director: Anton Grot; Edited by George Amy; Mask Effects created by the Max Factor Company; Vitaphone Orchestra conducted by Leo F. Forbstein. (Notes: The 1939 film THE RETURN OF DOCTOR X, although inspired

## HOUSE OF WAX



by this film is in no way connected).

Cast: Lionel Atwill (Doctor Xavier), Fay Wray (Joanne Xavier), Lee Tracy (Lee Taylor), Preston Foster (Professor Graham Wells), John Wray (Prof. Haines), George Rosemer (Otto, the butler), Leila Bennett (Mamie, the maid), Arthur Edmund Carewe (Prof. Rowlett), Harry Beresford (Prof. Duke), Robert Warwick (Police Commissioner Stevens), Willard Robertson (Police Inspector Halloran), Thomas Jackson (Editor), Harry Holman (Mike, the cop), Mae Busch (Gloria Bar), Tom Dugan (Police Sergeant).

## MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM 1933

Warner Brothers-First National. 73 minutes.  
In Technicolor. 7184 feet; Released in February.  
Directed by Michael Curtiz; Screenplay by Don Mullally and Carl Erickson; Based on the play by Charles Selden, with sequences adapted from the Baldwin-Tasker script for DOCTOR X, and possibly inspired by the destruction of Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum in 1925; Photographed by Ray Remanah; Art Director: Anton Grot; Edited by George Amy; Vitaphone Orchestra Conducted by Leo F. Forbstein; Gowns by Orry-Kelly; Stills Photographer: Scotty Welbourne.

Cast: Lionel Atwill (Ivan Igor), Fay Wray (Charlotte Duncan), Glenda Farrell (Florence Dempsey), Frank McHugh (Jim, the editor), Allen Vincent (Ralph Burton), Holmes Herbert (Doctor Remanah), Monica Remanah (Joan Gale), Edwin Maxwell (Joe Barry), Gavin Gordon (Harold Winton), Arthur Edmund Carewe (Sparrow, alias Prof. D'Arcy), Matthew Betts (Otto), Bull Anderson (the janitor), Pat O'Malley (Plains-clothesman), Thomas Jackson (Detective), Frances Waverly (Glenda Farrell's stand-in).

## THE FLORENTINE DAGON 1935

Warner Brothers-First National. 69 minutes.  
Directed by Robert Florey; Screenplay by Tom Reed; Based on a story by Ben Hecht; Additional Dialogue by Brown Holmes; Dialogue Directors: Arthur Greville Collins; Cameraman: Arthur Todd; Art Directors: Anton Grot & Carl Julius Weyl; Vitaphone Orchestra Conducted by Leo F. Forbstein; Edited by Thomas Pratt; Gowns by Orry-Kelly.  
Cast: Donald Woods (Juan Cesare), Margaret Lindsay (Florence Ballou), C. Aubrey Smith (Henry O'Neill (Victor Ballou), Robert Barrat (The Captain), Florence Faly (Teresa), Frank Reicher (Von Stela), Charles Judels (Salvatore), Rafaela Ottiano (Lili Salvatore), Paul Percasi (Antonio), Billy Malyon (Frederick), Egon Brecher (Earl), Henry Kolker (Auctioneer), Herman Bing (the baker).

## HOUSE OF WAX 1953

Warner Brothers. 88 minutes. Released on April 25th; Photographed in Natural Vision 3-Dimension; Color by WarnerColor; Produced by Bryan Foy; Directed by Andre de Toth; Screenplay by Crane Wilbur; From

(Continued on page 48)

# THE STOP-MOTION WORLD OF JIM DANFORTH

**An exclusive interview  
conducted by  
Mark Frank**



*All of us appreciate the importance of good special effects and most will agree that the technique of stop-motion animation has consistently added to the realism of the fantasy film. Both Willis O'Brien and Ray Harryhausen have immortalized themselves as masters of this painstaking process. Somewhat less well-known, though equally talented, is Jim Danforth. We believe that Mr. Danforth deserves to take his rightful place, alongside Messers. O'Brien and Harryhausen, as a stop-motion expert. We also wish to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Danforth sincerely for taking time out to grant us this interview.—MF.*

**PHOTON:** Perhaps we should begin by asking you to tell us a little bit about yourself and how you first became interested in animation as a career.

**MR. DANFORTH:** I'm 30 years old and I, like most of us, got interested in animated films when I first saw KING KONG at about the age of 12. KING and the Korda THIEF OF BAGDAD were probably the two films that influenced me the most. I saw them both within a few months of each other and that really set me on the track. I started doing it myself about then, but didn't do any real experimenting until I was about 15. Before then I had always been interested in art and puppets and marionettes. I had done a lot of little puppet shows for the neighborhood kids. And I fooled a little with ventriloquism. And then it more or less crystallized into what I wanted to do or, rather, what I was interested in. I didn't realize that I wanted to do it as a career until I was about 15, and even then I was dubious as to whether or not I would be able to do it. I thought: every child or young boy wants to be a fireman or a cowboy; it is just a dress or can I really do it? So I really set to work trying to accomplish something to see if I could prove to myself whether or not I had any true ability in addition to the interest.

By the time I finished High School I had pretty well decided that I could compete in this field. So I went out and got a job with a small company called Clotky Films.

**PHOTON:** Let me back you up for a moment. KING KONG sparked your interest, but did you know that KING used animation?

**MR. DANFORTH:** I don't remember exactly how much I knew back then. I knew about animation because I had some Kodak publications explaining in a very elementary way how to animate dolls, etc. for 8mm films. So I had experimented with that. In retrospect, I think that I realized that KING must be something allied to that, but I had no idea how the armatures were made or the rubber & fur put on. I knew it was a miniature, and I think I knew that it was animated.

**PHOTON:** Then you really went into it blind. You knew that you wanted to do it, so you just experimented on your own and taught yourself. Is that it?

**MR. DANFORTH:** Yes, that's true, and probably more so than now. Because of more interest and magazines like Famous Monsters, there's more of a dissemination of information these days, and someone who is interested can learn much more quickly. Which is as it should be, because it will further the state of the art. You know, the more an interested young person does not have to learn for himself, the more it will free him to put his mind to work on other problems which need to be solved. There's a converse to that, which is if you give it all to a young person and don't make him do any work on his own, he won't develop any initiative or ability. But you don't want every person who comes into the business to have to go all the way back to the beginning and find out, for example, how to formulate foam rubber. And the fact that you do build on your predecessors means that you can go on to reach greater heights than they were able to achieve, and your successors will be able to do the same.

PHOTOGRAPHY: I find that interesting, because you find that most young fans today want to emulate Harryhausen and really have no idea about the art itself and the labor it entails.

MR. DANFORTH: Yes. There's sort of aura which tends to surround this profession. And, in a way, it's good because it's good for the box office. But it's also slightly unfortunate because I think a lot of young people may spend time in this field without realizing how much work is actually involved and how much exacting technical preparation is necessary. It isn't all fun and games. And even if you get to the point of, say, Ray Harryhausen, you can be sure that when he's working on a picture, he's working many, many long hours and really killing himself.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Sounds like the voice of experience talking.

MR. DANFORTH: Yes, right. Let's see, we left off at Clieky Productions. We did some openings for the Minah Shore Show, which was very big at that time, and a dance sequence for the Easter show where she danced with an animated rabbit that appeared to be about 3 feet tall.

PHOTOGRAPHY: How old were you?

MR. DANFORTH: I was 19 then, but I started with Clieky when I was 18. We then did some 14 minute animated puppet films for the Lutheran Church that were distributed in Sunday Schools. Those were entitled "Davy & Goliath," and were later shown on television. I did those for about 6 months and then went to work for Project Unlimited. I had worked for them previously on THE TIME MACHINES, helping out between jobs at Clieky's. Then, when I was 19 or 20, I went to work for them full time. This was when they were preparing JACK THE GIANT KILLER, though the first thing I actually did was some miniature work on MASTER OF THE WORLD and some animation for GOLIATH AND THE DRAGON. Then we started in full blast on JACK THE GIANT KILLER which took for almost...well, I was on that about 9 or 10 months. That was quite an experience. It was the first chance I had had to work with professional process projection, etc.

PHOTOGRAPHY: I heard that Edward Small was originally offered 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD. Is that true?

MR. DANFORTH: Yes, I believe that's correct. I've heard that, but I can't remember who it was who told me, so I hesitate to add to that. I can't remember that I was very certain that it was accurate when I originally heard it. The story, as I heard it, was that Ray Harryhausen had, for some reason, approached Edward Small...although he had worked with Schaefer before so I don't know why he went to Small.

PHOTOGRAPHY: That seemed the flaw in the story to me too.

MR. DANFORTH: It may have been that Schaefer put an arbitrary budget ceiling on the project, or maybe Columbia had told Schaefer not to exceed \$400,000. Who knows? Anyway, it seems that Harryhausen took the story boards to Small who considered them for a long time and decided not to do anything with them. Well, the picture was made, of course, and it turned out to be one of the best animation films ever made. It made something like \$20 million on a \$600,000 production cost. So Edward Small, being a fool, realized that he had missed the boat. So, he thought, we'll just do it again. Ray himself told me that Small had approached him to do the effects on JACK THE GIANT KILLER, but Harryhausen turned him down. I really don't know why. Maybe he was angry, maybe he had enough work of his own. So, the script was written by Nathan Juran, who has directed SINBAD and 20 MILLION MILES TO BARTON, and they tried to copy all the elements which they felt had made SINBAD successful. They got the same leading man, the same villain, and spent considerably more money on the film than had been spent on SINBAD; unfortunately, in my opinion, at least, they were not able to make as good a film. They were so unhappy about it, in fact, that Edward Small doesn't want to hear the word "animation" again...he would never entertain the idea of doing another one.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Did you have anything to do with the story of JACK?

MR. DANFORTH: No. I was contacted by a strange coincidence. They were looking for someone to build the models and I had, in fact, submitted estimates on sculpting the puppets and doing the hair and taxidermy work. Howard Anderson was going to do the armatures by dis-assembling the

original KING KONG puppets, reworking them and adding such additional pieces as they needed. I was to do the sculpture in this hypothetical situation. Rubber casts were to be made by Don Fox Studios, then I would fabricate them back over the armatures, paint them, put in the eyes, and so forth. I went to quite a lot of work. I sculpted a prototype 2-headed giant which I photographed, and that photograph later appeared in Famous Monsters. I did a lot of technical drawings and breakdowns. But they were never submitted, for before I ever got to turning them in, they asked me for a figure and I quoted them something like \$1,000 to do the puppets. They never commented on it and I just didn't get the job. Well, I ended up working on it anyway because I was hired by Project Unlimited who got the entire bid as far as building the puppets, the miniature sets and supplying the animators. They were not doing any of the photographic work, or optical work. That was done by Howard Anderson Company and was a cooperative arrangement. Project was working for Anderson and Anderson was working for Small. So, the puppets were made by Project... PHOTOGRAPHY: I'm glad you said that.

MR. DANFORTH: I didn't like the puppets.

PHOTOGRAPHY: I've often thought that the animation is JACK was as good as that in SINBAD; the story, better. But the puppets were terrible.

MR. DANFORTH: Yes, they were. And it's quite difficult to animate a puppet when you don't find it aesthetically pleasing. Especially when you have to look at it with intense concentration, day after day.

PHOTOGRAPHY: I would imagine that it's difficult to animate the puppets no matter what they looked like. But, putting that aside, I can understand that when you're doing something that you take artistic pride in, it's a shame to have someone else have a hand in it and screw it up for you.

MR. DANFORTH: I did build some of the secondary characters. I built a small chimpanzee model, which I don't think actually appeared in the film, and a dog, which was in the film. Also, some miniature people. I don't think any of these were used, either. But I had nothing to do with the monsters.

PHOTOGRAPHY: I assume there were several people working on the animation.

MR. DANFORTH: Oh, yes. There were 2 other animators, I think, but by other people in addition to them. But basically there were 3 of us animating and I probably did about half of it.

PHOTOGRAPHY: What is the usual procedure, here? Do you work together on a scene or...

MR. DANFORTH: Not if I can help it. That doesn't seem to work out to well. That was one of the prevailing theories of animation when I was in work; it was thought that one animator couldn't animate more than one puppet and, in a fight sequence, there would have to be two animators. I had to fight that theory. The battle, as a matter of fact, between the 2-headed giant and the sea monster, was shot once by the two other animators and Small didn't buy it. So it was re-shot. I didn't do all of the second fight; we used a couple of shots from the first and the other animators re-did a few shots. But I did most of the second fight myself. It was much easier that way, especially when they're all tangled up as they were with the tentacle sea monster. It's hard to coordinate it with two people and you find you're constantly tripping over each other. There are times, of course, when two animators can be beneficial to a shot. If the puppets are widely separated or if there are so many creatures to move that you can't really do it all in an economical period of time, say as in the skeleton fight in Ray's JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS. He had an assistant for some of the shots with all 7 skeletons, just because it takes so long to move each one.

PHOTOGRAPHY: I have this mental image of you running up and moving your model, then running back to the camera and exposing the frame, then running up to the model again. Do you have people handling the lighting and the camera, or do you actually do the whole business?

MR. DANFORTH: Well, that actually depends on what picture we're talking about. Basically, I had nothing to do with the lighting or photography on JACK. I did only the animation, some of the miniature building and made some suggestions. As a matter of fact, I suggested that they use the system of using split-screens in conjunction with process projection--a system which I freely admit was



"stolen" from Ray Harryhausen, who devised it. No one there knew about that system, and there really had never been any intention to use it in the film. It took me a long time to convince them to use it, especially since they didn't understand it. They had to be shown. On WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH, I did everything. I mean I did all the photography and made all the set-ups. I didn't build all of the miniatures, because I had an assistant. I did just about everything else, except for about 80% of the chasmasaur sequence which was done by David Allen; I had my hands full doing matte shots. PHOTON: Let's leave that particular film for last. Now, I believe, we're up to THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM. I just saw it again the other night, and you weren't billed. Is that a special problem for special effects people in general and the animator in particular? There was an impressive list of special effects people for that film, tho your name wasn't there.

MR. DANFORTH: Yes, I was pretty angry about that. I realized on JACK THE GIANT KILLER that it was beyond their control; the contracts had been drawn up before I was even hired. But it was different with BROTHERS GRIMM. I even complained to Project Unlimited and they said that there was nothing they could do about it. I doubt if I'll ever really know the true story, but from what I've heard, a few other people felt the same way I did and made their complaints known. So that's why I did get a credit on the television series they were doing and, later, on THE 7 FACES OF DR. LAO. So it all works out in the end. But I felt that I worked pretty hard on BROTHERS GRIMM and I would have liked to have gotten a credit.

PHOTON: What did you do in the film besides the dragon? Did you handle any of the puppets?

MR. DANFORTH: I did a couple of scenes with the elves. Most of the elf sequence was done by Dave Pal, who is the son of George Pal. I also did a scene in the "Dancing Princess" sequence in which the flower goes to sleep. I enjoyed that one. The scene, however, was skip-framed. It's twice as fast as I shot it. It was originally a much more

languorous, sleepy shot. However, I had not been shown the sequence, and I didn't realize that it was a story point that when this potion is swallowed, the person goes to sleep very quickly. Russ Tamblyn does that little flip-up onto the couch, you'll remember. So I can see why they double-framed it, though it would have been nice if they told me that before I shot it. I could have shot it in half the time. But, anyway, I enjoyed working on that film. That's probably the only film that I've worked on that was fun all the way through. It was amazing because it was in three panel cinerama. No one had ever done animation in three panel cinerama before.

PHOTON: That means working with a different camera? MR. DANFORTH: They had to make the camera specially. We didn't even use the cinerama cameras that were used for production. All the animation work was done on two specially constructed animation cameras, which shot the frames in succession. "A" panel was exposed, then the camera was moved to a click stop. "B" panel was shot. The camera was moved into a third position and "C" panel was shot. Then it was racked back to the beginning again. In some cases we were shooting six exposures for one frame on the screen. But this was fun because it was new ground to explore and new territory that hadn't been conquered. There were no real problems and we came out right on schedule.

PHOTON: That dragon had quite a personality. MR. DANFORTH: It's very nice to hear you say that. George Pal, of course, contributed to that; he has a marvelous feeling for styles of comedy. And Gene Warren, who was one of the owners of Project Unlimited, put a lot of effort into working out the characterization of that dragon with me. So it was a cooperative effort. I enjoyed doing the dragon. I liked it, and maybe that's why it came out well.

PHOTON: What did you do after BROTHERS GRIMM? MR. DANFORTH: Let's see, that was the summer of '62, I went to work for Film Effects of Hollywood for IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD WORLD. I did that because I had hoped to work with Willis O'Brien,

who was working on the film. However, between the time that I made the arrangements and the time I actually started working, Opie had died; which was sad for the obvious reasons. It was also more sad for me because I had come so close to actually working with him. I had met him at Project Unlimited and once again when I went for an interview at Film Effects. But to come so close to working with the person who had really sparked my interest, and then not achieve it, was a great tragedy. Of course, he left behind some of his artwork, things which had nothing to do with MAD WORLD. He had ideas for an unbelievable snowman picture, which he had done a lot of story boarding and production design on. I was fascinated by these. Anyway, we carried on and did MAD WORLD. There weren't many animation shots in the film. In fact, there's only one in the final cut, although I did 17 of them. Plus some high speed minutes and some very small quarter inch scale mechanical miniatures.

**PHOTON:** What exactly is a mechanical miniature?  
**MR. DANFORTH:** A miniature that is not worked by stop motion; something that runs with a motor or with wires or gears. These miniatures ran by themselves, at a very slow speed so we shot at something like 6 or 8 frames-per-second to give them the correct speed. Anyway, after I completed that I went back to the project I started. We were beginning to make THE 7 FACES OF DR. LEO. There was a lot of pre-production work on that, so it was put aside for awhile and we carried on with television commercials and things. We eventually got going on that, probably in late summer of '63. That was an interesting film. Actually, had the story been closer to the book it would have been even more interesting. We ended up with only the Loch Ness Monster, and a lot of the wit and satire of the book was lost. It was still a good film, though, with a lot of interesting concepts. By today's standards it was probably a little weak, but at the time it was made it was unusual for an exploitation or science fantasy film to contain some of the philosophy that it did. Of course, we've come a long way in just a few years since then, but I did enjoy the film when I saw it. We were working on it, however, I had mixed emotions. I still had not reached the point where I was able to design the puppets that I was going to animate. I did sculpt the Loch Ness Monster, but I was working from designs made by someone else. I was not pleased with the design of the animal, which, again, makes it more difficult to work with during the animation. But I think the results were fine and the sequence came out well.

**PHOTON:** How did you feel on Academy Awards night?  
**MR. DANFORTH:** Well, obviously MARY POPPINS was going to win. And it really deserved to win because it had so much work in it, if for no other reason. It had a great variety of matte paintings, traveling mattes, animated cartoons and miniatures, and I thought that it was excellent. It was lots of fun to be there, though. A great honor. I have my nomination plaque hanging on the wall. Let's see. After that I went to work in the matte department at Universal Pictures. I did a little work on FATHER GOOSE, rebuilding miniature warships. And I built some little figures of Cary Grant and Leslie Caron; things like that. Things which I don't even think appeared in the film. I did an animation shot for Boss Hunter, and designed miniatures for The War Lord, helping to make the sets. Then I went back to Project Unlimited and we did some films for JPL, some more Outer Limits shows, which we had done before. They were going into their second season then; I really didn't do very much on the first season. It was kind of fun having Outer Limits there. The costumes were great. After that, I did an opening for the Hallmark Hall of Fame for Saul Bass, and then some more commercials for Project Unlimited. It was very slow there for awhile. I did some educational film work, then, the last picture that Project Unlimited did, which was AROUND THE WORLD UNDER THE SEA. I built some of the miniature submarine and did some work on the full-sized set, which they shipped to Florida and shot underwater. Once again I had my own ideas about how the effects should be done, and the bosses had theirs. Shooting underwater is very expensive, so I suggested that they simulate the underwater effects with drawings, as long as they couldn't afford to go first class. Well, I was voted down. They used a large wine

vat, about 28 feet in diameter and about 10 feet deep, which they set up on the parking lot. They tried to shoot in it, but were continually plagued by problems. The vat was wood, and it was permeated with algae which started growing after a few days. So, one Friday, they siphoned it off and put in clear filtered water, but when we came back on Monday it was completely opaque again. So they kept fighting that. They put in more chemicals and killed about 1000 seals trying to make the water work. They ended up stitching wires into the seals and puppeting them in the water like marionettes. The whole thing was ghastly. They wired the seals up to current to make them perform. They gave them a jolt and got them to do things. The whole thing was making me sick. And they weren't getting any footage they could use, anyway. So eventually we ended up doing it dry. Of course, by this time we had used up all of our time. So we really weren't able to do a good job of that. But I pointed all of the undersea backings; very busy, indistinct undersea canyons and so forth. Project Unlimited decided to disband after that, but I, very fortunately, got an offer from Cascade Pictures. So I didn't miss a day. I went right over to Cascade and started to work devising the Pillsbury Dough Boy, and a whole series of those things. I lasted for three years and was very successful, but I did not get the rent. Some of it was fun. I enjoyed the first few Pillsbury commercials.

**PHOTON:** Some of them are really beautiful.  
**MR. DANFORTH:** Yes, they're fun. But after you've done half a dozen of them you've pretty well explored the possibilities. That got to be a bit of a bore. Then we did Hans, the Nestles Man. That was a new character which I enjoyed for awhile. So, as I said, I was with Cascade about three years, doing commercials and developing at their expense what they call the Nagascopie Process, which is a system for doing mixed scale effects with normal-sized people in conjunction with giants or midgets. We used this system for a chain saw commercial with a Paul Bunyon-type character, and for a tire commercial with a 280-foot girl. I enjoyed that. Then came WALK DINO SAURS WALKED THE EARTH, which was based on a defective game. I heard about it in March of '66 and it wasn't until August that anything concrete happened. They contacted me to see if I was available to do the work, and I told them that I would make myself available if the film was actually being made. They didn't give me any further details about the film at all. One of the people at Warner Brothers said they thought it was called something like THE DAY THE DINOSAURS CAME OUT or WHEN DINOSAURS WALKED THE EARTH; they couldn't quite get it right. And that was about all I had to go on. I found it inconceivable that they would be making another prehistoric man and dinosaur film, so I assumed that they had another premise. I rather imagined that they had come up with some sort of time machine premise, since it seemed to me that this would be the only logical way to get people into a dinosaur picture. And they had just done a caveman picture. But, sure enough, they were doing another one. So, I went over in August for about 3 days to talk to them, came back again, wrapped up a couple of commercials at Cascade, and got my commitments out of the way there. Then I went back in September to start the production. We had 6 weeks of pre-production work, which really wasn't enough for a picture of that magnitude. Then we went to the Casary Islands for 3 weeks. We returned to Shepperton Studios where we did 8 weeks of interiors, and by that time it was the first or second week in January of '69. Then I started the animation effects, which took almost 17 months in all, finishing up on the 17th of June, 1970. That's a lot of months.

**PHOTON:** It certainly is. There's a story circulating, obviously untrue, that young Jim Danforth marched up to Hans and said: 'You want to make a picture?' I'll do the effects as good as Harryhausen and I'll do them for less.' Did you ever hear that one?  
**MR. DANFORTH:** [Laughing] Yes, I had heard a story to the effect that I had undercut Harryhausen in a bid for the effects of DINOSAURS. Now, it's possible that Ray did bid on the special effects. I don't know. Nobody has ever said that to me. The only time I had ever heard that was in this story. My statement would be that I would be that they probably approached him to see if he was interested and, either because he was doing GWANGI or perhaps be-

cause he had had an unpleasant experience on ONE MILLION YEARS B.C. I'm not saying he did, it's just that the two most probable possibilities were that either he didn't want to work for them again or he couldn't, so they had to look elsewhere. I know that they expressed to me the feeling that they were hoping to find someone who could do it faster than Ray had done. Which is a joke because nobody works faster than Ray Harryhausen; certainly I don't. But I never had any official word or confirmation that Ray had bid on it or that I was doing it cheaper. In fact, the effects cost a lot more than they did for ONE MILLION YEARS B.C. Also, I never really gave a bid. Much to my consternation, I was never involved with the special effects budget at all. I protested very early on that it was not possible to do this work if I didn't know what the budget was. But they figured that they would handle it, so I left it to them. We went way over the budget, which I never knew about, so I was in no position to tell if we were going over or not. So, I can't really answer that question. As far as I know, it's just a rumor.

**PHOTON:** WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH, then, is really your "baby".  
**MR. DANFORTH:** I'd hate to have it referred to as my baby. Let's put it this way: I was able to do more things on this film than I have ever been able to do on any of the other projects that I've been on. I would like to think that, on the next project, I'll have more control over the story and the effects sequences. The script to DINOSAURS was already written when I got there, the monsters had already been chosen, except for a couple of minor things. For example, they wanted to use a triceratops, but they had used one in MILLION YEARS. So they thought of a styracosaur (which they had drawn on the original poster), but I knew that Ray was

using one in GWANGI. So I suggested a chasmosaur, instead. Little things like that. I did design the animals, though I didn't choose them.

**PHOTON:** Did you make any story changes or set up any sequences and situations?  
**MR. DANFORTH:** Only minor things. I wrote the pterodactyl sequence, which is the only thing I did. Because, as you say, it's the perfunctory pterodactyl sequence. The sequence had been written twice already by the director, Val Guest, who also wrote the script. But it had been thrown out by the producer. Both Val and I were very fond of the original sequence he had written, which I was probably one of the best animation sequences that had been written for a film of this type. I couldn't fault it, I don't think I could have improved it. It would have been difficult, but it was a beautiful sequence. But the producer didn't want it. She wanted something simpler, or not at all. Val wrote another one and it, too, was rejected, so it looked like there would be no pterodactyl sequence. They changed their minds when they analyzed the script as to time and found they were desperately short as far as screen time was concerned. I kept saying: "Yes, but we're long as far as production time is concerned!" So they wanted the sequence and I just drew it -- when I say I wrote it, I mean I drew the storyboards for it -- and basically it was unchanged. The producer added one shot of the pterodactyl falling, otherwise it was almost as I wrote it. Because of the location that they picked, we were not able to do what I thought would be the most spectacular shot. It was supposed to show, for the first time on the screen, a man run past the camera into the distance, then the pterodactyl swoop in over the camera, grab him up and fly away with him, all in one shot. Well, we have a modified version of that in which the man runs past the camera, the pterodactyl swoops over the camera and hovers above him, coming down toward him. We then cut to another traveling matte shot in which he is picked up. Because they insisted on staging it on the side of a hill, running in the wrong direction, it wasn't possible for the pterodactyl to pick up the man and fly away with him or he would have flown into the side of the cliff. So we had to junk that. Anyway, the only other real change I made was in the plesiosaur sequence. The original death of the plesiosaur was to have been achieved by having several men stand on each other's shoulders in a human pyramid to pour fat on the back of the monster and try to ignite it. When that didn't work out, they tried their second plan, which was to grab a dead tree which is lying on the beach. They all run forward toward the plesiosaur which obligingly sticks his neck down and opens his mouth so they can shove it down his throat. Well, I just couldn't see that on the screen. Besides, a plesiosaur thrashing around with a tree sticking out of its mouth seemed a bit ludicrous, so I talked them into a fire death. Well, as it turned out, Deangel is killed by fire, too, which is really hadn't thought about, though I had read the synopsis at the time. I don't really know why I let myself do that because, you know, here we are again with another fire death, which has been done even before that, of course. But that's how it was done. And those are probably the only things I really altered, to speak of. I threw out tremendous amounts of stuff, though. They had so many animation animals planned, that we'd still be working on it next year. Just imagine! They wanted sea monsters fighting in the water to be picked up by a tornado and deposited on the beach. People running from giant crabs

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coming out of the water. Well, we retained the giant crabs but we chopped the sea monsters. They scripted aerial shots of dinosaurs running across the plateau and scenes of pterodactyls blowing in the wind and crashing down into the village. Just incredibly complicated things; things that would have been very nice to do, but couldn't have been done in the time and budget for that film.

PHOTON: Isn't there a sequence involving giant ants?

MR. DANFORTH: The ant sequence was on my list of sequences to be chopped, but they wouldn't accept that; they were really committed to having that particular sequence. So, we reared up to do it. The ant armatures were made and, in fact, on location we shot a lot of the live action for it. We built a full-size ant, two feet long, and strapped it to the back of one of the extras. We shot him running along, staggering, falling down & dying. This was to be used in conjunction with the animated ant footage I would do later. Anyway, because they wouldn't allow us to use stuntmen in that sequence (it seems they were using the stuntmen to play featured parts in order to save money), I had to use Spanish-speaking extras and just couldn't get them to do the action correctly. I did 3 takes on a single shot of one of the men running through the scene just looking back. The animal wasn't even touching him, but he couldn't look in the right place. So I took what I could on location and decided to do the rest in the studio. I shot scenes of the volcanic slope, people running along, approach shots, long shots and backgrounds for the travelling matter. When we got back to the studio in England they decided that if they cut the sequence they could save "x" number of dollars and "x" number of days in the shooting schedule. So we chopped it without ever having shot any animation. We did start to build the puppets, but never finished them.

PHOTON: How do you approach a scene? Could you ex-

plain what is involved in setting up a sequence?

MR. DANFORTH: We really didn't have anything very elaborate in WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH, but the more elaborate a scene is, the more carefully it must be rehearsed. This was the plan with the ant sequence, which never came about. But something like the skeleton fight in JASON AND THE ARKNAUTS that Ray did had to be rehearsed well in advance with doubles for the skeletons. It was choreographed, just as a dance would be. As far as DINOSAURS is concerned, we just did what rehearsal we needed at the time we were shooting the live actors. We used various devices, such as poles, to show the actor where the animal would be if he were in the scene. I try to explain each scene to the actors. You can, of course, just take the actor and say: 'stand here, look 10 feet in the air and turn and run on the cue,' and you'll get some sort of result. But it's much better if they know what the animal looks like, what the motivation of the shot is and what's going to happen. Then they can believe it and they can put more into it. We tried to do that whenever possible, though sometimes the time didn't permit it. Some of these shots were really just grab & go. You know, we'd just say, 'Stand there,' then we'd turn the camera on and say: 'Alright, everybody run out. Fine! Cut! Print!' There were such too many of these in this film, as a matter of fact. We probably spent the most time rehearsing the master shot for the plesiosaur sequence in which the men have a rope around the plesiosaur's neck and are pulling it down. The synch had to be worked out very carefully on that shot; later the real rope had to be fixed up with the animated plesiosaur and, in some cases, with an animated rope. The timing has to be perfect, and various things have to be filmed which will not appear on the screen in order to enable me to line that up. They're shot at the time the live action is shot and are eliminated when the animation is put in. Obviously the

#### WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH





people in that scene are pulling on something--a mechanical device called a rig which is permitted to move only in the type of an arc that the plesiosaur would move. That way we won't find out later that the rope is going somewhere where it's not possible to make the plesiosaur's neck go. Once again we really didn't have enough time. I'd been promised a day for that set-up; we eventually ended up doing that and several other cuts in 2 hours. So you just get by on that. All right, if we had more time it would have been better, but it's probably adequate for the type of film that it is.

**PHOTON:** Do you ever find that you haven't shot enough when you go to do the animation work? Do you ever have to shoot that missing footage over?

**MR. DANFORTH:** In that particular scene we did have to shoot some over. The studio stuff were retakes for some days on location, but they don't come out. Once you've finished the live action, however, there is no going back; if you don't have it, you don't have it. And that's why in some cases during the plesiosaur sequence, if you're very astute, you'll see that there are animated people in instances when it would seem that there would be no reason for animated people. In other words, people that aren't in direct contact with the monster. If you were to surmise that you'd be quite right; there was no reason for them other than we didn't get them shot on location, so they had to be animated in order to give the effect of the crowd that they wanted. So, there are usually ways to solve such problems, but it takes longer, is more expensive and usually is not as good.

**PHOTON:** So, having shot the live action, you go to your studio and begin work on the animation?

**MR. DANFORTH:** Well, first we edit the sequence very carefully, to make sure that we don't have to shoot any more animation than is necessary. Of course, if it's shot correctly, it's shot according to the storyboard, so we're pretty well covered. Anyway, we get the tempo and timing as closely as we can, and then the color prints made up of the sequence so that I know what the color balance will have to be. Then we proceed. As you say, backgrounds are projected on a rear process screen, the foregrounds have to be lit properly, which is a lot more complicated than it looks. The camera doesn't always see what the eye sees, because there are a number of wavelengths of light which are invisible to the eye, but which the camera can see and vice versa. Ultra violet, for instance, is not visible to the human eye but photographs as blue. There are various ways of compensating for this, but you have to be very careful; it isn't just a matter of putting the puppet in front of the screen and turning on the camera. Whenever possible, I like to shoot a color balance test, especially if it's a major set-up on which we'll have a number of cuts. It's a one-time set-up, we may put it up, make the best possible guess, shoot it and take it down the next day. There are a number of scenes in *DINOSAURS* in which the color balance isn't very good, but you have to remember that it's all done with a limited time schedule.

**PHOTON:** Now we come to the heart of it, the actual work which has to be done. I assume you've studied motion?

**MR. DANFORTH:** Oh, yes.

**PHOTON:** And animal figures and things like this. How do you know how to move this damn thing?

**MR. DANFORTH:** It depends upon the animal. If it's a realistic animal - something specific - than it would have to move in a specific way. Of course, no man has ever seen a dinosaur, but I know the proportions of the limbs and roughly how they were articulated. So you try to conform to that and you go to the nearest living animals that might be similar, and these won't always be reptiles. In fact, only rarely would they be reptiles. You might look at an elephant. For the chasmosaur sequence we spent a lot of time studying films of baboons, because it's one of the few animals in which the legs are jointed in the same way.

**PHOTON:** So you use these films as references while you're actually doing the animation?

**MR. DANFORTH:** No, not usually. It tends to inhibit your style if you just copy the action. There might be times when you would want to do that, like if you were duplicating a human figure. But usually it's better to understand the action thoroughly and then do it. Sometimes you have to refer back

to the reference, but I usually try to work it out in advance. A running animal is, of course, the most difficult to do. We had a lot of difficulty with that in *DINOSAURS*, trying to get it right. It's quite a challenge. Of course, the really fun animation in the picture for me was the baby dinosaur, because I could put a little more into that. I like humorous animation, I won't say the baby dinosaur is humorous, but it's light-hearted and the closest thing to comic relief we have in the picture. It's more fun doing something like that than the basic roaring and growling.

**PHOTON:** I imagine that it would be easy for a scene like the one in which Victoria Vetri plays with the baby dinosaur to become ludicrous.

**MR. DANFORTH:** It's difficult for me to give an objective answer to that question, being so close to the film. When I read the script, I thought that they had to be joking, which is probably the most objective opinion I could have on the film, because I only got deeper and deeper into it as time went on. We'll have to wait and see what the audience thinks when they see it. It may not even be bad if it gets a laugh in that case. Of course, if they totally reject it and get up and leave, we're in trouble. But if they laugh with it and enjoy it, that's alright. You know, I'm a bit of a curiosity on my own person. I don't reject the entire film or any film that puts prehistoric man in with dinosaurs without some sort of premise explaining why. If you simply state that man and the dinosaurs were contemporary...well, according to our best knowledge this is totally inaccurate and I don't find any justification for a film like that. I told Hammer this but, of course, they were already committed to the project. That particular scene works about as well as anything in the film, and I think it will be accepted.

**PHOTON:** Can you tell us a little about strobing? What exactly is it?

**MR. DANFORTH:** Strobing is when the eye tends to perceive individual poses as individual poses, rather than as a smooth blending of the action. This is something different from what people call the "jerk" of animation. That comes from just bad animation or badly registered animation where the puppet is bumped or jiggled between one pose and the next. But strobe can occur even in what is essentially smooth animation. Even correctly made moves will strobe in certain cases because they don't have the blur that live action photography has because, of course, the puppet isn't actually moving during the exposure time. I blur the wings of the pterodactyl for about 80% of the shots, which I think makes the action more fluid than has previously been achieved in that type of sequence. I didn't do very much of this in the other sequences, because it's very time consuming and more difficult with animals than with birds. In some cases, in the rest of the film, I did use multiple exposures for each frame to create a pseudo-blur. In some cases where the plesiosaur is breaking loose from his bonds and the ropes are snapping -- and a rope snapping is a very quick action -- I did blur the ropes a little bit to try to soften the effect. It helps. And if we could afford to do it in all scenes, animation would be a lot better than it is. But it's economically impossible.

**PHOTON:** Have you ever worked with Ray Harryhausen?

**MR. DANFORTH:** I've never worked with him, but he has been a big source of inspiration for me. Though *Obie's KING KONG* sparked my interest, I think that if it had been left only to the work that O'Brien did, I might not have carried on or might have only been with animation as a hobby. But seeing before me the fact that a man, in the current conditions, was doing work that was inspirational to me, and making a living at it, served as something to idolize and aim for. Ray was very kind in letting me come to the studio during the final stages of the effects work for *7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD* to talk to him and have a look around his shop. That was a big boost to me; it really helped a lot. He was very, very kind and helpful in my going on and I learned a great deal from him. And I tremendously enjoy going to see his films.

**PHOTON:** The only other animator I can think of offhand is David Allen, who is working on *RAIDERS OF THE STORM RINGS* now. Have you worked with him?

**MR. DANFORTH:** Yes, I know Dave very well. He worked on *DINOSAURS* with me. I brought him over to animate

the chasmassur because it became apparent that we were getting quite behind and it was going to be necessary for me to do a lot of glass shots, matte backgrounds and such for the sequence. I couldn't really do the paintings and the animation at the same time, so I went to Hammer and asked if we could afford to bring Dave over. They were a little reluctant, but when I explained to them that it would make it possible to finish the picture...[laughter] you know. They finally agreed, especially since the matte paintings weren't in the original plans at all. They were only being done because they had cut back on the sets in the studio, so had the sets been larger we never would have needed the paintings. We had planned on 3, but ended up with 25. So I think they realized the ridiculousness of the situation and brought Dave over. He did about 80% of the chasmassur sequence and a couple of the baby dinosaur shots. It was a very nice gesture on his part to come and help out, as it probably caused him some trouble at Cascade Pictures. He had to get a leave of absence, and I'm sure they weren't particularly happy about that. But he did it, I think, as a favor to me and I was very touched by it. He's now in the final script stages of RAIDERS OF THE DUSTY KINGDOM, which I think is going to be terrific. Dave got word on EQUINOX which will also be out shortly because it was purchased by Jack Harris. It's quite different from the original version that was produced by Dennis Muren. We all sort of...all of the fans banded together and worked on it in our spare time. It was a cooperative effort that had some crudeness to it but was a lot of fun. Well, Harris reshoot a lot and altered the story quite a bit. It's a more polished-looking film now, though some of the significance has gone out of it and some of the story points that helped it make sense aren't there. And there's some very good animation by Dave in there.

PHOTO: Do you think there is a chance that there will soon be too many cooks and not enough brew? In other words, too many animators and not enough jobs to fill--at least not enough mature films to work on. Obviously, producers aren't beating down animator's doors, which is surprising to me and to most fans. Do you think that there's a danger there?

MR. DANFORTH: I think there are two dangers there. One, that there will be more animators than there are jobs, and two, that there will be too many chiefs and not enough Indians. The problem is, of course, that everyone wants to get to the point where they can get their ideas on the screen. So you find that there's a peculiar situation developing in which there are a lot of people working for that goal independently and nobody is particularly interested in working for anyone else, if you follow me. Well, for instance, approached to do a film of great magnitude--like another KING KONG or a LOST WORLD or something like that--I'd be very hard pressed to know where I was going to come up with enough animators and technicians to get the work out in a reasonable length of time, one that would interest a producer. You can always do it with just a few people and animators and not much interest cost on the loan which the producer has taken out to make the film go up, and it becomes economically infeasible. So I'm a little concerned. I feel that I'll have to keep any future projects that I get involved with very simple so that I can do it all myself, because it's too hard to find anybody to work on it. The people who are useful and interested enough to do it usually haven't got enough ability yet--they're usually younger people that are coming up. By the time they've put in all the years that are necessary to train themselves to do the work, they are quite understandably reluctant to work for someone else because they feel that they've earned the right to put their own ideas on the screen which, in effect, I think, Dave and I have done. I usually want to go back to, say, any of the other previous situations which we've talked about here. I wouldn't want to go back to be one of 3 animators on a film that I had nothing to do with. I would like to think that someone is interested in my ideas and would want to know what I feel the animal should look like. But this is true for everyone in the business. It's difficult to cut it out. I wouldn't say that it's impossible, but I think that this is tending to be one of the problems.

Now, as far as the amount of work that's available for the number of animators, I think that if we're going to take this attitude about wanting to see our own ideas on the screen, then we have to extend ourselves even further; you can't really wait for the work to come to you. Occasionally, like DINO SAURS just came to me out of the clear blue sky. I didn't solicit that work, but that doesn't happen very often. I think the animators are going to have to go out and instigate their own projects, whether it's writing their own stories or, maybe, just making models to a producer--or some demonstration footage--and if they really like the idea, a story around a particular technique. Or they can get together an entire project, like Dave is doing with RAIDERS OF THE DUSTY KING. I think this is really what has to be done. There's no use sitting back and saying, well, there isn't any work and why doesn't someone make an animation picture. Remember, not too many people understand animation, and producers least of all. And they really don't want to embark upon a project if they don't understand how it's going to be completed. So it almost has to start with the animator. This is what Ray has done through the years and why he's been so successful. He hasn't waited for anybody to come to him. He's gone to them, and I think that this is the answer to the problem. If the animator isn't the one to begin the project, the producer probably has gotten started with a lot of misconceptions and laid a lot of groundwork which will only have to be undone. And if it isn't undone, the film will not be a total success. Like JACK THE GIANT KILLER, for instance, which had a lot of good things about it; but we were also fighting a lot of technical misconceptions and doubling back to redo things that wouldn't have had to have been redone if people who didn't understand animation weren't making the decisions that affected the animation.

PHOTO: You're talking about a point here that fans have been discussing for awhile. Most animation films just highlight the effects and push the story into the background. We've always thought that animation should be used to enhance the other properties of the film, such as plot, acting, etc. What are your feelings about this?

MR. DANFORTH: I agree absolutely. I can remember--and this statement might be misconstrued--that when I heard Ray Harryhausen was doing 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD, I had mixed emotions. Even though I was only 17 or 18 at the time, I knew what I kind of film it was going to be. I knew that as a fan of the film, I would enjoy it, but I also knew it wouldn't be the definitive Sinbad film. It would probably lack a lot of the elements inherent in the Sinbad stories which had, to some extent, been captured by, say, the Douglas Fairbanks film, which suffered from a lack of special effects. So I realize that it wasn't going to achieve a total blending here. It would be an effect oriented film, it was a rather effect oriented film, and I think that continues to be the problem. Of course, I very much enjoyed the film but, well, compared to Korda's THIEF OF BAGDAD, it's a very pedestrian film. It would be nice, someday, for someone to make a really beautiful film using animation only where it needs to be used and not let it rule the roost, the way it tends to in these films. In some of the films that I think I'm working on, I will avoid this problem. Of course, there are a lot of financial and personal considerations here. It may be emotionally satisfying to know that you've made a film that is an artistic success because you have restrained your work and allowed it to be used only where it is justified in being used, but that doesn't pay the rent. So there's a certain justification for the other type of film: they give you a couple of years of work and the fans love them. Of course, as the fans get older they realize, as you've pointed out, that they are sadly lacking in story content. I can say nothing very charitable about a film like GMAO, except that it has over 300 animation cuts in it, more animation than anyone has seen in a long time. As far as being a film, it's just dreadful. It violates all the rules of character development and screenplay writing, and how anybody could spend the amount of money that they did and the time that they did, and make a picture like that on such a wheezy foundation is totally beyond me. But it continues to be done, and will be as long as it makes money. It's certainly not the kind of film that I would like to see many more of, because if we have too



# WHITE ZOMBIE

A FILMBOOK  
BY RONALD V. BORST

## DEDICATION

It may seem a bit strange to discover an article dedicated to someone. However, there's one of the great things about fame: the ability to do things out of the ordinary. I should like to take this opportunity to dedicate the research & work which went into the following review of WHITE ZOMBIE and "Zombies in the Cinema" to my first friend in fandom (and my first editor-publisher as well), Mr. Gary Collins. I met Gary back in 1988 and my first article (an abominable review of RETURN OF THE VAMPIRE) appeared in the 18th issue of "The Garden of Eatin'" a club & magazine originally founded by Dave Neil, and eventually taken over by Fred Clarke. It was Gary who first introduced me to WHITE ZOMBIE, via his soundtrack on tape, and his own laudable review within the pages of "GOG". Since then, I have viewed the picture several times, and it continues to remain the finest gothic film of that era. This is an article I have long wanted to tackle, and I am immensely proud of not only having the honor of dedicating this work to my friend, but to include within the work and article written by Gary comparing WHITE ZOMBIE with RESPECT OF THE ZOMBIES. I hope that PHOTON will be favored by many future contributions by this highly talented film reviewer & researcher. -- FFB

## WHITE ZOMBIE

A Halperin Production (1932)  
An Amusement Securities Corporation Presentation  
A United Artists Release

Producer.....Edward Halperin  
Director.....Victor Halperin  
Story & Dialogue.....Garnett Weston  
Cinematographer.....Arthur Martinelli  
Assistant Director.....William Cody  
Film Editor.....Howard McLaren  
Musical Arrangement.....Abe Meyer

## Art and Technical

Ralph Berger.....Herbert Fargeon  
Jack Pierce.....Harold Anderson  
Earl Accellie.....Guy Revier Williams  
Herbert Glaser.....Conrad Vrieschler  
Sidney Marcus.....L. E. Clark

## Sound by Clarco

BCA Photophone Noiseless Recording  
Passed by the National Board of Review

## The Players

Bela Lugosi.....Murder Legendre  
Madge Bellamy.....Madeline Short  
Joseph Cawthorn.....Doctor Bruner  
Robert Prater.....Charles Beaumont  
John Harlan.....Neil Parker  
Brandon Hurst.....Frederick Peters  
Frederick Peters.....Chauvin  
Don Crisp.....Pierre  
Clarence Muse.....Driver  
Annette Stone.....Maids  
Velma Gresham.....Maids  
George Burr MacAnnann.....Von Gelder  
John Winton.....Zombies  
Claude Morgan.....Zombies  
John Ferguson.....

## THE STORY

A series of echoing drum beats and a native death chant resound through the silence of the night, as a group of Haitian peasants conduct an eerie ceremony in the middle of a lonely road. From out of the darkness a carriage approaches, only to be momentarily halted by the assemblage of natives. Inside the vehicle are Madeline Short and Neil Parker. Madeline has come to Haiti from New York City to marry Neil, and employ in the bank at Port-au-Prince. On her journey to Haiti, Madeline had met wealthy Charles Beaumont who had prevailed upon the young lady, and later Neil, to hold the marriage ceremony at his plantation house, in whose direction they are presently heading.

"Looks like a burial," Neil remarks as they draw near the Negro gathering.

"In the road!" queries Madeline skeptically, as she leans toward the window. "Driver...what is it?"

"It's a funeral, m'cellie," their Negro driver answers solemnly. "They afraid of the men who steal dead bodies...so they dig the graves...in the middle of the road...where people...pass all the time."

"...Well!" sighs Neil nervously. "That's a cheerful introduction for you to our West Indies."

Madeline laughs lightly, and soon the coach has passed the grim spectacle. As the death chant & drums fade, a pair of glowing eyes appear on the screen; they slowly fade to a figure, and then a black cloak and broad-brimmed hat standing by the side of the road. Soon, the carriage bearing the young lovers approaches, and the driver reigns up when he catches sight of the cloaked figure.

"Do you know where is the house of Monsieur Beaumont?" he blurts out, half in fear.

The stranger does not reply, but instead goes directly toward the door of the carriage where his sinister features are revealed for the first time; a countenance reminiscent almost of...Satan! Silently, he leans in the window to glare at the beautiful girl. The young couple are completely mystified & speechless, seemingly unaware that the stranger's hand has fallen upon Madeline's flowing white scarf. Suddenly the driver spies a group of strange figures shuffling toward the carriage from a nearby hill.

"Sombre!" he utters in terror, and immediately whips his team to escape the oncoming figures. As the carriage leaps forward, the sinister stranger retains possession of Madeline's scarf...almost as if he required it for some future black ceremony.

As the coach continues its journey through the dismal and desolate countryside, Madeline casts her neck realizing that her scarf is gone.

"It felt like hands clutching me!" she gasps, referring to the unknown man's hypnotic-like glare. Within moments, the carriage enters a new state of a large plantation and the driver halts before a well-lit manor house. Madeline & Neil disembark from the vehicle as the Negro puts their luggage down.

"Why did you drive like that, you fool?" Neil exclaims angrily. "We might have been killed!"

"Worse than that, monsieur. We might have been caught!"

"Caught? By whom? Those men you spoke to?"

"They are not men, monsieur. They are dead bodies!"

"Dead?" questions the puzzled Neil.

"Yes, monsieur. I buried The Living Dead! Corpses taken from their graves who are made to work in the sugar mills and fields at night," the driver tells him, lowering his voice, as if the twilight trees themselves might have ears. Then, turning suddenly, he spots the same group of "men" moving down a distant hill toward the plantation.

"Look! Here they come!" he shouts fearfully and, without waiting for any reply, quickly remounts to his seat and whips the horses out of the courtyard, driving for his very life.

As both the coach and the group of strange figures disappear, Neil & Madeline are startled by the distant baying of a wolf or dog. As the baying continues, Madeline spots another figure emerging from the nearby forest.

"Look! Look!" she points, drawing Neil's attention to an old man dressed in the typical white Panama suit.

"Ah, hehl! Excuse me, please. Heh, have you got a match?" the old man gestures toward Neil, but then continues. "Heh, did I frighten you? I'm sorry. I'm ugly enough, I suppose."

"No, it wasn't you," Neil reassures the elderly stranger. "Something happened back on the road there. We, er, stopped to speak to some men. Our driver told us they weren't men at all. He said they were corpses."

"Corpses?" the old man thoughtfully ponders, looking back to the dismal road.

"Surely you don't believe it, do you?" Neil wonders aloud.

"No!" the gentleman quickly assures him, but then he adds with a slight laugh. "Well, I don't know, Haiti is full of nonsense and superstition. They're always mixed up with a lot of mysteries that'd...turn your hair gray. I've been a missionary here for, oh, 30 years, and at times I don't know what to think." Then, noticing that the butler has taken their errand and has opened the door for them, the man turns to the young people. "Come, let's go into the house."



"No, wait! Perhaps I'd better see them. It might look odd if I didn't."

"Very odd, sir. Especially as Doctor Bruner is a trifle skeptical as to your... motives, sir."

"Never mind my motives. Has that other person sent word yet?"

"No, sir. Not yet, sir."

"He's twenty-four hours late!" Beaumont exclaims with irritation, replacing the jewels in their proper place.

"I wish you'd keep away from... that man, sir," the servant boldly suggests. "He'll make trouble for you."

"You needn't worry about that. I'm not afraid of him."

"I'm not easily frightened sir. You should know that. But what you're planning is dangerous."

"Don't you suppose I know that, Silver? You don't seem to realize what this girl means to me. Why, I'd sacrifice anything I have in the world for her. Nothing matters if I can't have her!"

"I think...ah...I think you'll like Haiti," Doctor Bruner continues in an attempt to keep the conversation from dying. "Most people that...oh!" he suddenly starts, noticing that Beaumont has entered the hallway.

"Madeline! I'm delighted to see you!" beams Beaumont, taking her hand. "Well, you're more than welcome!" he adds in the same tone, shaking hands.

"Thank you, sir."

"Doctor, it was very kind of you to come," Beaumont politely but coldly remarks. "I know what a busy man you are."

"No, no, not at all. There's, umh, there's a native family live out here that I've been trying to see for a long time. After this young couple are safely married, heh, I'll leave."

"But surely you will stay for dinner after the ceremony?"

"Oh, no, no," replies the missionary quickly.

"No, I must run along."

"Well, that's a great pity. We had something very special prepared for this occasion."

Turning from the old man, Beaumont clasps Madeline's hands in his once more. "It was very good of you, Madeline, to humor the whim of a lonely man. There was little time to prepare, I couldn't do half the things I wanted to for you."

"You've done more than enough already, Mr. Beaumont, for a comparative stranger. You've made us so happy, giving Neil a position in the States."

"Neil?" questions Beaumont, completely in a world all his own.

"Yes! Yes, indeed!" Neil immediately steps up to remind his host of his presence.

"Oh, yes, of course. I'm sure Neil will make a very good agent. But you must be tired after your drive. You'll get some rest. Silver!" he calls, and the butler appears. "Silver will show you to your rooms."

"This way, please," Silver gestures.

After the guests go up, a small, open carriage arrives in front of the manor house. Its driver is one of the strange men of whom the Negro driver was so frightened. His overall appearance is, indeed, frightening: white leggings, no shirt, but a long black cloak, its hood striding his head, but not the scowling face, nor the glaring, but seemingly lifeless eyes. Suspended on a chain about his neck is the German Iron Cross. With a blank stare in his eyes, the man knocks at the main door of the manor. From inside, Silver nods.

Upstairs, Neil goes out onto the balcony leading from his room. There he spots the strange figure, now seated again in the driver's seat. From the house, Beaumont appears, dressed in his own black cloak and hat. He hesitantly mounts to the seat beside the inhuman driver, and without exchanging a word, they proceed out into the blackness of the night.

The carriage bearing Beaumont nears a large wooden structure from which a loud grinding noise is emitting. Emerging from the carriage, Beaumont follows the man slowly into the building. His guide is now revealed to have a club-foot, and the interior of the weird building is seen as being a large sugar mill. Beaumont and his companion proceed down a long corridor. At last comes to a large room. There, Beaumont's eyes bulge with won-

"Oh, yes. Come, dear."

"Is, umh, is Mr. Beaumont in?"

"You're expected, Doctor Bruner," the butler coldly replies, taking their things.

"Yes, heh, heh; yes, I-I've been sent for to marry someone...maybe..." he laughs and the others join in. Bruner then notices the butler's directive stare toward his own hat.

"Oh, heh, yes. Excuse me, please," he apologizes and hands the servant his hat. Followed by Doctor Bruner, Madeline and Neil proceed on into a cheerily-lit reception hall where Bruner again begins the conversation.

"Er, how long is it that you know Mr. ... Beaumont?"

"Oh, only for a few days. Madeline introduced him on the docks of Port-au-Prince."

"Oh! And you?" Bruner turns his gaze to Madeline.

"I met him on the ship from New York. He was very kind during the voyage."

"So Madeline and I planned to be married the moment she arrived, but Mr. Beaumont persuaded us to come here. And he promised to take us out of the bank at Port-au-Prince and send me to New York as his agent."

"Hum, strange. Very strange," reflects the Doctor, scowling. "You...", he begins, but is interrupted by the butler's entrance.

"I'll tell Mr. Beaumont you're here."

"Yeh," the Doctor half-answers, and after the butler departs, again turns his attention to the young people.

"It's alright, isn't it, Doctor?" Neil asks, sensing something is amiss.

"Oh, I guess so. Heh, you see, I've only met Mr. Beaumont once or twice but, heh, heh, he never struck me like a man who'd take the trouble to play fairy godfather to a young couple like you...unless...unless..." but he cannot seem to say exactly what he feels.

"Unless what, sir?"

"...I suppose you'll think I'm a meddler! old fool, but, you know, I'd feel a good deal better if you'd clear out of this place, after you're married, and have nothing more to do with Mr. Beaumont."

While Doctor Bruner is attempting to warn Neil and Madeline of his fears for them, the butler informs his master of the arrival.

"The young people have arrived, sir. And Doctor Bruner. They're waiting in the reception hall."

"Show them to their rooms and tell them I'm out," replies the curly-haired, rather handsome Beaumont who fingers an expensive pearl necklace as he talks. The butler starts to leave, but Beaumont stops him.

der and fear as he spies dozens of Negro zombies working on two levels. The top level, from which Beaumont has entered, is composed of zombies carrying baskets of sugar cane to a hopper which grinds it by means of other zombie workers turning a wheel on the lower level. The zombies shuffle slowly, seemingly unconscious of their movement. One of the number carrying a basket for the hopper suddenly loses his balance and falls noisefully into the grinding machine. The sound of his "goat" is heard, and the sounds of the zombie's crunching bones can barely be distinguished from the grinding of the cane.

The club-footed zombie leads Beaumont down the stairs to the lower level, and from there to the rear of the dimly lit mill, where a primitive sort of office has been set up behind an iron grating. It is here that Beaumont comes face to face with the same stranger who had previously confronted Neil & Madeline on the road earlier. This sinister bearded individual is Murder Legendre, a necromancer--a conjurer of dead spirits; master of the black arts--who has resurrected these dead men, these zombies, from their graves to work in his mill for his own gain.

"Delighted to see you again, Monsieur Beaumont!" Legendre exclaims, rising from behind his desk and extending his hand. When Beaumont, still staring at the unearthly sights around him, fails to take it, Legendre withdraws it slowly, clenching a fist behind his back. Regaining himself, he extends notions Beaumont to a chair. "Please!" he utters in an overly sweet voice. "Please!" he repeats to his hesitant caller who slowly seats himself, wary of the half-dozen zombies which stand in the semi-darkened recesses of the room.

"I'm sorry," Legendre apologizes, seating himself, "to have kept you waiting, monsieur. I have been on a journey...recruiting men...for my mill."

"Men?" questions the apprehensive Beaumont, again glancing about.

"They work faithfully...and they are not worried about long hours. You...you could make good use of men like mine on your plantation," he adds with a touch of humor, gesturing toward the " undead" in the rear.

"No!" replies Beaumont at once. "That's not what I want."

"Then perhaps you wish to talk about the young lady who came to your house this evening?" the sorcerer slyly suggests.

"You've seen her?" Beaumont excitedly leans forward.

"On the road...tonight," Legendre informs him, and pulls from his coat the long, white scarf. Replacing it, he continues, "There...was a young man with her."

"They're to be married...tonight. You've waited too long to do anything!"

"What do you want me to do?" Legendre innocently queries.

"If she were to disappear...for a month..."

"And what do you hope to gain by her disappearance?" Legendre interrupts.

"Everything!"

"Everything?" Do you think she will forget her lover in a month?

"Just give me a month! One little month!" Beaumont confidently states, clenching his hands.

"Not in a month...nor even a year, monsieur. I have looked...into her eyes. She is deep in love...but not with you."

"They're to be married within an hour. There must be a way!" Beaumont utters the evil conjurer, who slowly rises from his chair.

"There is a way," he informs his guest, who also rises. "The cost...the cost is heavy!" he whispers.

"You give me what I want, and you may ask anything!" Beaumont promises, at which Legendre places his hands on his guests shoulders to whisper his plan to them.

"Not Not that!" Beaumont answers in sheer horror, his eyes blazing at what appears to be an unearthly suggestion. Nevertheless, the necromancer goes over to a cabinet where he takes out a small box. He brings it back to where Beaumont stands.

"Only a pinopode, Monsieur Beaumont!" he whispers slyly. "...in a glass of wine or...or perhaps a flower?"

But Beaumont is overcome with horror at the

terrible potential the drug holds, and can only glare at the small box.

"Work it! The time is very brief!" warns Legendre, his voice laden with menace. "You must do your share if I am to help you."

Beaumont takes the box, but is still wondering if he should use its contents on the woman he loves.

"Keep it, monsieur! Keep it! You may stamp your mind!" Legendre booms. "Send me word...when you use it," he commands as Beaumont slowly crosses to the iron grating.

Turning back, Beaumont swears: "I'll find another way!"

"There is no other way!" the human devil states with finality.

In her room at Beaumont's plantation, Madeline is preparing herself for the ceremony that is to come. Quinous drums are heard in the distance.

"They are driving away evil spirits!" one of the two maids explains.

"Close it! Close it!" commands Madeline as one servant moves to the window to obey her wish.

"Here's your gown!" the other maid approaches, holding up the white dress.

Later, as Mendelssohn's famed march is heard in the background, Silver places a "special" rose on the table beside the other flowers. Beaumont appears at the top of the stairway, Madeline in arms, and together they proceed down.

"Welcome, Madeline, to our home. There's nothing else in this whole world, dear. Heaven or Hell lies within this building for me. You could raise me up to Paradise or you could blast my world into nothingness. There's time even yet, dear. I can make you the envy of every woman. I'd give my life to make you happy. Oh, listen to me, dear, before it's too late!" he entreats with deep emotion.

"Don't...please!" Madeline painfully responds, but Beaumont is determined to have his way.

"Don't go into that room! We could be in Port-au-Prince in half an hour. There's a boat sailing at midnight."

"You've been so wonderful. Don't spoil everything now," Madeline attempts to compel Beaumont as he pauses at the foot of the stairs.

"One last gift before I lose you forever," Beaumont finally relents and, going over to the table, picks up the drugged flower that Silver had left. He hands it to her and, after sniffing the fragrance, she places it in her large bouquet. Then, without another word, Beaumont leads her into a large room where she joins hands with Neil as Doctor Bruner begins the ceremony!

"Dear! beloved, we are gathered together here, in the sight of God, and in the face of this company, to join together this man and this woman, in Holy Matrimony, which is an honorable estate..."

As the ceremony proceeds, Murder Legendre enters into the courtyard outside by way of a back door in the garden. Pausing for a moment to glare at the brilliantly lit house, he goes over to one of the lighted lampposts on either side of the gate, where he reaches into the glass to extinguish, then remove the wax candle. Taking Madeline's scarf from the bride, he begins wrapping it about the middle, he removes a large knife and begins carving into the wax. As he works, a vulture lights atop the other lamppost. Legendre smiles wickedly at the bird which screeches at him in return. Finally, Murder finishes his work and replaces the knife within his coat.

Inside the manor house, the ceremony has been concluded and Doctor Bruner has taken his leave. The two young people and their host are seated at an impressively laid dinner table.

"This is the night of nights!" exclaims an overjoyed Neil, unaware of the menacing eyes of the butler cast in his direction. "If I live to be a thousand, it'll never happen again!"

"A toast to the bride! To Beauty's Queen!" Beaumont proposes.

"Gladly, m'lord," Neil replies gallantly, then attempts to be poetic as well. "Leave but a kiss within the glass!" He then hands his young bride his own glass. "Fair gypsy...read my fortune! What do you see in the glass?"

"I see...happiness! I see...love. Far more than you deserve," she adds mischievously.

"Is that all?"

"No, I see..." she begins, when suddenly the Satanic features of Murder Legendre appear within the glass. "I see..." but again she is unable to describe the feeling which has come over her.

"What is it?" Neil asks with concern.

"I see Death!" she blankly replies and, overcome with dizziness, her body wavers. At this very moment, Legendre is thrusting the waxen image into the flame of the lit lampost outside in the garden.

"Madeline! Madeline, what's wrong?" Neil implores. "Madeline, my dear! Please!"

But Madeline is now fully under the spell of both the witchcraft & drug. She faints into Neil's arms.

"Madeline! Madeline! Can't we do something?" Neil turns, panic-stricken, to his silent host. "She's...she's..." but he cannot speak it. As the evil magician glares toward the house from the garden, Madeline's eyes close to embrace death.

"Madeline! Madeline, my wife! My wife!" Neil weeps bitterly over the girl's prostrate form.

The following day a priest solemnly pronounces the final words of the funeral service, as Madeline's white coffin is laid to rest in an old crypt. His words echo hollowly within the cold stone walls:

"The grave of our Lord and Savior, and the love of God, and the fellowship with His Angels, be with us forevermore. Amen."

For Neil, the ceremony is the end of the world. With the death of his bride, he loses all sense of reality, and that same evening finds the young man slinking heavily in an attempt to forget. He sits in a drunken stupor in a cheap nightclub, oblivious to the gaudy music; the dancing shadows play on the wall behind him. He hears Madeline's voice calling to him; shadows of other women become, in his mind, Madeline's own shadow; visions of her beckoning to him cause him to rise and grapple futilely in the air. And always there is her voice.

While Neil is trying to forget the tragedy, Beaumont and Legendre rendezvous at the ancient weed-covered cemetery. A dog, or perhaps a wolf, howls somewhere among the many bizarre crosses & graves. As the two men proceed silently toward the zombies that comprise the half-dozen "White" undead corps.

"Look! Zombies!"

"Yes...they are my servants," Legendre answers unperturbed. "Did you think we could do it alone? In their lifetime they were my enemies," he explains and gestures toward one of the ashen-faced individuals, and old man with white beard, dressed in a long flowing robe with strange magical symbols painted in white on it.

"Wagob, the witch doctor, once my master. Secrets...I tortured out of him!" Legendre then turns his attention to the next, the club-footed driver who brought Beaumont to the old mill the preceding night.

"Von Gelder, the Swiss! Swollen with riches! He fought against my spells to the last. Even yet

I have trouble at times," he snarls, then glances toward the second bearded man, dressed in what was once a well-tailored black suit.

"His Excellency, Kuchard. Once Minister of the Interior." Then, indicating a pirate, still wearing his bandana and earrings, "Scalpier, brigand chief!"

He next introduces a haggard-faced figure in a tattered uniform. "Marquez, head of the Gendarmarie."

Finally, his gaze comes to rest upon the tallest and most powerful of the devilish six. A huge brute, with a scraggly beard and half-exposed barrel chest.

"And this, this is Chauvin!" Legendre boasts with pride. "The High Executioner, who almost executed me!" he adds with humor, but the smile fades as quickly as it came. "I took then, just as we will take...this one."

"But what if they regain their souls?"

"They would tear me to pieces. But that, my friend...shall never be!" he confidently assures him. Then, by holding his right thumb upward, and his left thumb down, Legendre slowly clenches his fingers together at chest level. The zombies react to this mental command by opening the door to the old crypt and, after Beaumont & Legendre have gone into the black hole, they follow in their shuffling manner. As the two men wait on the steps, the "undead" proceed to unroll Madeline's coffin and carry it over to the foot of the steps. Legendre and Beaumont quickly open the top of the coffin, exposing the "corpse" face for a moment.

"Madeline!" Beaumont shouts with joy and, with silent gestures, Legendre has his servants carry the coffin from the tomb.

In the meantime, a distraught Neil seems to sense that Madeline is in distress; he races out into the night calling her name over & over. His cries are heard by Legendre & Beaumont, and the former motions for the zombies to carry off the coffin. The weird procession is soon glimpsed moving quickly over the grave-covered hill.

Moments later, Neil arrives at the ancient, vine-covered tomb, totally filled with fear. Noticing the open door, he reels in terror, his hand to his mouth. Then, he slowly goes down into the crypt. His scream of discovery & heartache echoes from within.

Caught up with reality at last, Neil disregards his emotions and goes to seek the aid of Doctor Bruner at the old missionary's home. The scene opens in the Doctor's study, sometime after Neil has informed him of the grave-rubbing incident.

"There's two explanations beside me. Either the body was stolen by members of a death cult, who use human bones in their ceremony, or else..."

"Or else what?" Neil asks, soberly.

"She's not dead!" comes the shocking reply.

"...Not dead?" Neil repeats, incredulously. "Are you mad? I saw her die! The doctor signed the certificate. I saw them bury her!"

"Now wait a minute. Wait a minute. I'm not mad. But I've lived in these islands for a good many years...and I've seen



things with my eyes that made me think I was crazy. There are superstitions in Haiti...that the natives brought here from Africa. Some of them can be traced back as far as...Ancient Egypt...and beyond that yet, in the countries that was old when Egypt was young!"

"Yes, but what has that to do with Madeline? I kissed her as she lay there in the coffin...and her lips were cold!"

"Let me explain. Now just a minute, I'll explain. Wherever there is a superstition...you'll find there is also a practice. Now, do you remember what your driver told you the night he took you to Beaumont's house?"

"Oh, about those horrible creatures we saw?" Neil recoils.

"Yeah."

"He said they were corpses...taken from their graves," Neil elaborates as if the incident was without importance.

"Oh, now, wait, now. That's the superstition. Now for the practice. The ghouls which steal the corpses from the graves are supposed to put them there in the first place."

"Do you mean that Madeline was murdered, so that somebody could steal her dead body?" Neil asks skeptically.

"Ah, nonsense!"

"Ah, no. Not her dead...not her dead...er. Her body, yes, but not her dead body. That's better," he says, correcting his stuttering.

"Well, surely you don't think she's still alive...in the hands of natives? Oh, no. Better dead than that!" he cries, as the old doctor picks up his pipe.

"Excuse me, please. Have you got a match?"

he asks, and Neil hands him one. "Thank you."

"You don't believe that, do you?"

"Say...there's been lots of people that's been pronounced dead that came alive again and lived for years. Now, if nature can play pranks like that, why isn't it possible to play pranks with Nature?"

"Oh, I don't know," replies the young man, rather indignantly.

"Hummm," snorts Bruner. "Your driver believed he saw dead men walking. He didn't. What he saw was men alive in everything but this...and this," he points to his mind and heart.

"Oh, the whole thing has me confused. I just can't understand it!"

"I don't blame you. I don't blame you," the doctor agrees, while walking over to a dusty cabinet of books. "I've been trying for years to get to the bottom of this thing, to separate what you call...fact from fiction," he returns with a large volume. "The law...the Law of Haiti acknowledges the possibility of being buried alive. Here it is in the Penal Code. I'll read it for you," he offers, blowing a layer of dust off the book.

"It's in French. Do you speak French?"

"No," Neil tells him, as Bruner gives a slight cough.

"Excuse me, please. Have you got a match?"

"Right here. Here's one," Neil answers impatiently, picking one up right in front of the old man.

"Oh, thank you. I didn't see it." Lighting up his pipe, Bruner begins, "I'll translate for you." "Article...Article two-hundred and forty-nine. The use of drugs or other practices which produce lethargic coma, or lifeless sleep, shall be considered attempted murder."

"Yes."

"Attempted," emphasizes Bruner.

"Yes, I see," Neil says, rubbing his brow.

"Yes, alright, now then: 'If the person has been buried alive, the act shall be considered murder, no matter what results follow.'"

"Beaumont!" Neil shouts. "Say, you said that you couldn't understand why he was so interested in us. Do you think he did this?"

"No. No, I think it's natives' work. Natives' work, in fact. Of course, if you want to, we can go to Beaumont's house first," he suggests, then he swears, "If I can get my hands on the devil that's responsible for this...I'll make him such an example that every witch doctor in Haiti will be shaking in his bones!"

"But we can't do this alone! Can't the authorities help?"

"Ah, heh! Authorities! Heh, Neil, my boy, you don't know these islands. The native authorities are afraid to meddle! I'm not! I got friends among the natives. They'll tell me things that no gendarme could ever get out of them. Because...I'm a preacher, they think I'm a magician. Before we get through with this thing, we may as well say...that even the Devil'd be ashamed off!" he reveals, and then adds with disgust, "Oohh, these witch doctors!"

The scene shifts to disclose an ancient castle reared high upon a rocky cliff a hundred feet or more above the ocean. The structure seems to be hewn out of the cliff rock itself, and its general events are boldly outlined against the total destruction which surround them. This is the fortress home of the evil Legendre, and the place to which Beaumont has brought his "white zombie."

Inside the castle, the somber notes of a piano echo throughout the great hall; a huge, cold room whose high ceiling is supported by several large pillars. Despite the large gothic windows, little light permeates the hall. Near the largest of the windows rests a grand piano at which the "undead" Madeline plays "Liebestraum" forlornly. From across the room, Beaumont listens to the melody from an antique chair. Rising, he goes over to sit on the bench.

"Madeline..." he begins, but the girl continues playing unemotionally, glaring blankly into space. Beaumont takes the string of pearls he once fingered in his own mansion, and places them about her neck. He receives no response.

"Foolish things! They can't bring back the life to these eyes. I was mad to do this...but if you'd have said no to me, I'd have done nothing for you, given you anything. I thought that beauty alone could satisfy...but the soul is gone! I can't bear those empty, staring eyes!"

Madeline suddenly stops her playing, and rises silently as Beaumont continues to entreat her. "Oh, forgive me, Madeline! Forgive me! I can't bear it any longer! I must take you back!" he declares, as the sinister accompaniment appears at the head of the staircase.

"Back to the grave, monsieur?" Legendre smiles sardonically.

"No!" replies the startled, yet determined Beaumont, who rises and turns toward Legendre. "You must put the life back into her eyes and bring laughter to her lips. She must be gay and happy again!"

"You paint a charming picture, monsieur," Legendre muses, leaning over the railing. "One that I should like to see...myself." Slowly, he comes down the stairs to join Beaumont.

"You must bring her back!" he implores.

"Aren't you a trifle afraid, monsieur? How do you suppose those eyes will regard you when the brain is able to understand?" he remarks with some amusement, as Beaumont takes Madeline's hand in his own. After a moment, he lets the icy limb fall, and looks off with bitterness and guilt.

"Better to see hatred in them...than that dreadful emptiness," he admits, as Madeline silently





goes up the stone steps into the upper regions of the castle.

"Perhaps you're right," Legendre agrees. "It would be a pity to destroy such a lovely... flower." Inspired now, he suggests, "Let's drink to the future of this... flower! A glass of wine!" he booms, clapping his hands.

"Silver! Bring wine! We have a toast to drink," orders Beaumont, when his manservant appears. The butler brings the drinks and Legendre wraps his fingers around the top of Beaumont's glass, carrying it from the tray over to where he stands.

Beaumont takes it unthinkingly, and Murder raises his own goblet.

"To the future, monsieur!" he proposes and instantly watches Beaumont as he drains his glass. It is only when he notices Legendre's eyes fixed upon him that he suspects what has been done. He glares at the empty goblet.

"Only... a pinpoint, monsieur! In a flower... or, perhaps, a glass of wine!" Legendre sneers with obvious relish.

Beaumont drops his glass, visibly waning. *You devil!* What are you trying to do to me?

"I have other plans for mademoiselle... and I am afraid... you might not agree, I have taken a fancy to you... monsieur!" the fiend states in total triumph.

"Silver! Silver!" screams Beaumont in desperation. The faithful Silver immediately moves toward the magician, brandishing the silver serving tray over his head. Murder turns to meet the attack by merely exerting his powers of hypnotism over the butler, who succumbs at once to its influence. At the same time, Legendre exerts his mental control over his bodyguard of zombies. A door at one end of the hall swings open of its own accord, and through it come marching Von Gelder, the huge Chaurin, and the others. They take hold of the struggling Silver and carry him from the hall.

"Don't! Don't!" Beaumont weakly entreats, but is himself helpless to take action. Meanwhile, the zombies haul the screaming butler into the innermost depths of the castle, where they hurl his body into a rushing underground river. Still screaming horribly, he is soon borne away and under by the force of the current.

Upstairs in the great hall, Legendre once more raises his own glass of wine in the direction of Beaumont. "To the future, monsieur!" At this point, Legendre's vulture, his "familiar," appears clinging to the outside of the window, screeching loudly.

"The Vulture!" exclaims Beaumont in revelation. "Fowl! Not that! Not that!" he moans in terror, now knowing that he will become exactly what he sought to release Madeline from,

Neill and Doctor Bruner, mounted on white stallions, are riding through the Haitian backlands in search of some clue, any clue, to Madeline's whereabouts. Drums are heard in the distance.

"We ought to be pickin' up an old witch doctor around here pretty soon. His name is Pierre. Heh, heh. Known him for years. He's a great old fella. I don't know just where to find him..." he trails off, as they come upon an old Negro with a donkey. The man is conversing with a younger man over matters of voodoo.

"There are evil spirits in the road!"

the old man mutters. "I give you a [magic] potion, and here is one for the ox." After receiving the magical charms, the man leads his ox off down the road. The old man, Pierre, then approaches Bruner and Neill, the latter almost collapsing from fatigue and sickness.

"Young man, he is sick with fever!" speculates

Pierre. "Yes, hey, wait a minute! We can't afford to have you sick. Neill, why don't you go over there and lie down and take a little rest? We got a hard day before us tomorrow."

As Neill leaves to take the Doctor's suggestion, Bruner takes Pierre aside. "Now... now, then, Pierre, come on. He's gone. We can talk."

"It is a dangerous thing you ask me to do, eh."

"Oh, well now, listen here, you... heh, heh. We're old friends, you and me, and I want to go on."

"Turn back... before it is too late!" Pierre warns.

"Oh, no, no, I've come too far to turn back now."

"I am too old to go all the way with you."

"Well, listen. Can't you get somebody to go with us?"

"My people all afraid of the mountain!"

"Why?"

"Because it is called the Land of the Living Dead."

"Well, have you ever been there?"

"I am the only man that ever came from there alive! There is an evil spirit man... that is called... Murder!"

Later on, after Pierre has left, Bruner goes down to the dismal seashore to get a closer view of Legendre's mountain castle. He returns to where Neill is sleeping, bearing some water for the young man. Nearby, up in a tree, a vulture screeches. Bruner glances up in its direction.

"Vultures... just as old Pierre said. A cloud of vultures always hovers over the House of the Living Dead."

"Madeline... is she there?" Neill asks weakly.

"No," Bruner attempts to comfort him.

"Oh, I must go and see!"



"No, no, no, no, no!" Bruner says firmly, holding Neil down. "Neil, my boy! Please, please, lie down and rest, please. You'll feel stronger in the morning. You rest. Let me go up to see what I can do." He says and, going back to the shore, begins to make his way toward the forbidding castle.

Inside the room prepared for Madeline in Legendre's mountain home, Madeline is walking about in her hypnotized state. As she looks out from her balcony, Beaumont's two aides wait silently.

"Why is she so restless tonight?"

"Perhaps she remembers something."

"They never remember anything when they are like that."

"No?"

That same evening, Madeline again walks out onto her balcony. Far away and below her, Neil suddenly wakes and seems to see his love in a half-fervid trance.

"Madeline! Madeline!" he cries out, and at once gets up and lurches off toward the mountain. Madeline unemotionally returns from the balcony to sit at her dressing table. One of the maid's is about to brush the girl's hair, when she suddenly loses control unable to continue.

"No, no! I can't! I can't!"

"You must...it's your turn," her companion reminds her.

"Let's run away!"

"Shhh! He might hear you!"

"I can't stand it! I'm going to run away!"

"If he is to find you, he will make you like her," she indicates their mistress.

Neil has succeeded in reaching the stairs that lead up to the main door of the castle, while Madeline continues to stand looking from her balcony. In the great hall, Beaumont now reduces to the capacity of a small table, sits at a small table. Legendre, attired in a tuxedo, approaches his victim who, in his feeble attempt at speech, knocks over a goblet. Murder seats himself beside him.

"Can you still hear me?" Legendre mockingly inquires. "It is unfortunate you are no longer able to speak. I should be interested to hear you describe your symptoms." Taking out his knife, Legendre begins to carve an image into a waxen candle. "You see, you...are the first man to know...what has happened," he tells Beaumont nonchalantly, tapping the wax off his blade before adding: "None of the others...did."

At this point, Beaumont manages to raise his right hand enough so that it falls on Legendre's arm.

"You refused to shake hands...once," Legendre counters, removing his hand as Beaumont garbles something unintelligible. "I remember. Well, well. We understand each other better...now."

Neil, vainly searching the castle for his bride, is finally overcome with exhaustion, and as he comes into Legendre's view at the top of the staircase, he falls unconsciously onto a nearby couch. Murder rises, walks to the top of the stairs, and clasps his hands in the magical embrace. Madeline comes from her room at this command--the doors again opening by themselves--and Legendre returns up the table downstairs. Madeline comes down the steps to halt silently before Legendre and Beaumont. The warlock gives her a mental command to pick up his knife from the table, which she does. Beaumont, even in his half-zombie state of mind, realizes that Legendre is playing, and the accreant smiles as Beaumont's eyes continue to plead helplessly. Madeline, knife in hand, goes silently up the stone steps, stopping before Neil's body. Murder clasps his hands together and she raises the knife, but something within her, something "human", stops her from sinking it into the prostrate form at the last instant. Again Murder clasps his hands and, just as she is about to succumb to his deadly command, Bruner's hand comes out from behind a pillar to stop her. Unable to see what Bruner has done from his position below, Legendre continues to press his hands together. Unable to complete his command--torn between what he has ordered and what she cannot do--Madeline rushes from the castle, down the long flight of steps from the main door.

Neil awakens suddenly, and can think only of his beloved. "Madeline! Madeline!" he cries, rushing through the castle until he finally spies his lost love standing near a bench in what might once have been a garden.

"Madeline!" he cries. "Madeline! I've found you! You're alive! Alive! What's the matter? It's I, Neil," he says, holding her in his arms and seating her on the bench beside him.

Unknown to Neil, Murder Legendre has followed him, and has now come silently down the steps. There he clasps his hands together once more, this time to summon his zombie bodyguards who surround the young couple.

"Oh my darling, what have they done to you?" the young man attempts to get Madeline to answer, but to no avail. It is then that he becomes aware of the strange figures closing in on all sides. Rising, he rushes over to the sinister Legendre who quietly surveys the young man.

"Who are you? And what are they?" he asks Legendre in anger, gesturing toward the still-advancing zombies.

"For you, my friend, they are the 'Angels of Death!'" Legendre reveals with a leering smile.

Hemmed in from all sides, Neil backs up toward the cliff edge as the zombies draw nearer. Drawing his revolver, he shoots point-blank at the undead figures--the bullets leaving their black holes in the dead men's bodies. But the shells have no noticeable effect.

Doctor Bruner again appears, as if from nowhere, and knocks the concentrating Legendre senseless with a club.

"Run! Run!" shouts Bruner. "Run!"

Neil, forced to the very brink of the cliff, jumps out of the way as the first zombie walks blindly over the edge. Mental contact with their unseen master broken, the rest follow suit until the last of the undead have disappeared over the edge of the precipice. Bruner and Neil rush over to Madeline, who seems to have regained a part of her faculties.

"Madeline, don't you know me dear? It's Neil," he says, but even as she smiles faintly, Legendre regains consciousness and again begins to exert his extraordinary power of control over her. Her smile fades, and she again assumes her empty, glazed stare.

"I could swear...for a moment she recognized you!" Bruner exclaims, when he suddenly notices that Legendre has revived. His zombies destroyed, Murder rushes up the stone steps.

"Come on! Don't let him get away!" shouts the Doctor, and both he and Neil rush to capture their adversary. Noticing their pursuit, Legendre turns of the steps, and pulls from his pocket a capsule which he hurls at them. It explodes on contact and emits a poisonous gas which momentarily stops their pursuit. As the woman pauses to watch, and try to gain mental control over them, he fails to notice the slowly approaching shadow from behind him. Charles Beaumont silently creeps up behind the evil magician and moves to throw himself into Legendre when the vulture, Legendre's ever-present familiar, seeks to warn its master through its screeching. Its warning comes too late for Legendre, however, as Beaumont succeeds in forcing Legendre off the cliff's edge at the price of his own life as well. Screaming horribly, Murder plummets into the raging sea far below, where the water claims master & slave as its final victims. Screeching continually, the vulture sweeps down in the direction of its master's corpse.

Madeline, freed of Legendre's power forever, wakes from her dream. She embraces an overjoyed Neil.

"Madeline, my darling!"

"Neil. I...I dreamed..." she begins, as old Bruner comes up to the young couple, pipe in hand.

"Heh, heh, heh, excuse me, please, heh. Have you got a watch?"

END

(continued from page 18)

many more like that, we won't be having any more animation films.

PHOTON: That's a prospect that none of us would find too satisfying, let's hope it doesn't come to that extreme. Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your opinions with our readers.

END

# ZOMBIES IN THE CINEMA



by Ronald V. Borst

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** The author wishes to express his thanks to film buffs Don Willie, Bill Warren, Walter V. Lee, Jr. and Fred Clarke for their aid in providing obscure data on some of the rarer titles discussed in the following historical survey.

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** In "The Vampire in the Cinema", I traced the many varied ways in which the Undead have been presented on the screen during the past 50 years. The vampire film, although it certainly has faded badly from time to time, has certainly glared as an abundance of above-average productions and has had a good scope of excellent films as well. The same may be said for the various "Frankenstein" titles, especially those emerging from the Universal and Hammer studios. However, if the film researcher cares to descend the ladder of sub-genres in the monstrosity film, it soon becomes apparent that other film series have not been afforded the same production sincerity. Near the bottom rung rests the zombie film, perhaps the most neglected of the sub-genres and one which has consistently received insulting screen treatment.

As with the vampire, there are borderline films which some may well consider to lie within the zombie genre for one reason or another. Therefore, before proceeding with an examination of the zombie on film, a definition of the zombie picture should be set down—limitations made so that related films which crop up in the future can be easily defined in relation to this article.

British film writer Denis Clift undertook considerable research to provide an exhaustive chronicle of zombie pictures in his book, *Movie Monstrosity*. Although the research is admirable, the author seems to have left himself open by defining the zombie very broadly. Clift defines the term as "...a new-dead corpse revived from the grave

and reanimated without soul as the ensoulment of its master...". This not only includes the Haitian-Voodoo Indian conception of the creature, but also brings in films like *THE CARRIAGE OF DR. CALIGARI* (i.e., Conrad Veidt's Cesare) and *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* (in which a plague squares the dead to rise and feast on the living). For this survey, I will only discuss those films which (1) have, as their basis, some degree of voodoo, or (2) utilize the term "zombie" in their title, even if only for exploitation purposes (i.e., *SOMEBODY OF THE STRATOSPHERE*). As always, any additions or corrections from our readers are welcome.--RVB.

## EARLY ORIGINS

The term "zombie" is derived from the same source as those other supernatural terms: "vampire" and "werewolf"...from man's imagination; to be specific, from a combination of religious belief (and, possibly, fear) and superstition. Unlike the other two, the zombie can almost be termed a local creation, having its foundation in our neighboring West Indies (rather than from remote corners of Europe and Asia). For although the ancient practice of voodoo can be traced back to Africa, the monstrous zombie does not seem to have developed until black magic spread to the Isle of Haiti, usually identified as the birthplace of zombies.

The term first came into notoriety through William B. Seabrook's account of his visit to Haiti, *The Magic Island*, first published in 1929. It is a common work, usually found in any large second-hand bookshop, and which has recently seen a paperback printing. Seabrook devoted an entire chapter entitled, "...Dead Men Working in the Cane Fields," to the zombie, and his definition termed the creature:

"...neither a ghost, nor yet a person who had been raised like Lazarus from the dead. The 'zombie' they say, is a soulless human corpse, still dead, but taken from the grave and endowed by sorcery with a mechanical semblance of life--it is a dead body which is made to walk and move, and so, if it were alive. People who have the power to do this go to a fresh grave, dig up the body before it has had time to rot, galvanize it into movement, and then make of it a servant or slave, occasionally for the commission of some crime, more often simply as a grudge against the habitation or the farm, setting it dull and heavy tasks, and beating it like a dumb beast if it slackens."

Unlike the vampire or lycanthrope, a zombie cannot be destroyed by the well-known religious methods, sunlight or silver bullets. It is from sunup to sunset in the same fields, and is fed a tasteless food called "bouillie." The food must be devoid of salt, and the zombie must never be permitted to taste meat, for to do either would end in the zombie's realization that he is indeed a "walking dead"; he would voluntarily return to his grave to remain there permanently.

During his travels about Haiti, Seabrook was determined to view this phenomenon for himself, but eventually discovered that a group of so-called zombies toiling in a field were no more than dim-witted misfits; individuals pressed into slavery by unscrupulous villains. But in spite of this discovery, local talk was so convincing that Seabrook's friends continued to insist that the zombie as a supernatural creature did indeed exist; that relatives of dead people reported seeing their long-dead relations months after they had been entombed.

As was the case with both DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN, the zombie saw a theatrical adaptation before being captured on film. In 1917, Kenneth Webb produced a three-act melodramatic ZOMBIE, which was produced on the New York stage by George Sherwood. Its setting was a mountain estate on the Haitian isle. Owners Jack and Sylvia Clayton (Robert J. Stanley and Pauline Starke) are unaware that their plantation overseer, Pedro (George Regas), is a debaucher in the occult. When Jack Clayton suddenly dies (or, as it appears later, suffers a semi-death), his evil employee commands him to rise from the dead to open the plantation safe. Of course, such foul deeds cause Pedro to meet his just reward in the conclusion of the play, but not before a high master of zombies, a Professor Wallace (Burr Caruth) turns up as well!

ZOMBIE, unlike such past stage successes as THE CAT AND THE CANARY, THE RAT and, of course, DRACULA, was not received well by critics nor the public, and soon disappeared into total obscurity. Nevertheless, the play is notable in that it contained a mixture of thrills and comedy (with humor predominating, according to the reviews) and contained a practical use of the black arts who revived the dead to work for his own profit--a theme that was adapted for the first, and by far the best zombie film the movies have yet given us.

#### WHITE ZOMBIE

"Unusual times demand unusual pictures," blarneyed the ads heralding the arrival of WHITE ZOMBIE during mid-summer of 1932. The ads continued with: "Here's a burning, glamorous love-tale told on the borderland of life and death...the story of a fiend who placed the woman he desired under the strange spell of WHITE ZOMBIE, rendering her soul-less, lifeless, yet permitting her to walk and breathe and do his every bidding. This is the sickest, weirdest, strangest of all love stories!"

The American movie-going public, not yet sated with the horror film as it was with the western and war genres, received WHITE ZOMBIE with the same tremendous box-office response with which they had greeted both DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN. Only about a month after the release of WHITE ZOMBIE, like the early Universal tallies, stressed the bizarre blend of the romantic and the macabre; for as the Great Depression had ushered out the Jazz Age of the late '20's, replacing it with a

grimier, harsher look at reality, Hollywood attempted to combat the feeling of the times with romantic escapism and supernatural horror. And of the many gothic films that were to emerge in the period ranging from 1931 to 1936 in Hollywood's finest horror cycle, WHITE ZOMBIE emerges as one of the finest. Even though the film was brushed aside by contemporary film critics, it succeeds, in fact, as it is shown to be: a blending of melodrama and horror; a fairy-tale theme with poetic atmosphere and artistic touches. Dated even by 1932 standards, WHITE ZOMBIE has mellowed over the years, aged like the best wines until it achieved a stature among buffs as one of the most uniquely contrived films from that illustrious period.

Initially inspired by Seabrook's *The Magic Island*, the only real connection between WHITE ZOMBIE and the non-fictional work is in its faithful presentation of zombism. The pressbook from WHITE ZOMBIE does quote liberally (without giving specific credit) from Seabrook's description of the zombie, but only to stress believability in the audience. Indeed, the producer-director team, Victor and Edward Halperin, went so far as to twist the meaning of Article 249 of the Haitian Penal Code. The original article never actually used the term "zombie", which the Halperins added parenthetically to add to the realism of the concept.

Film historian Arthur Lennig has written a most interesting review of the film in *The Classic of the Film*. Lennig accurately points out the close similarity the film has with the traditional fairy tale, what with its beautiful (white costumed) heroine, evil (and cloaked in black) sorcerer, benign wizards, dreadful spells and poisoned wines and flowers. WHITE ZOMBIE's theme is basically the timeless theme of good vs. evil, but because the concept of zombism has never since received the same sincere treatment it had in the Halperin production, WHITE ZOMBIE has retained a certain rarity and uniqueness in its horrors; a uniqueness that the various vampire and Frankenstein pictures have lost over the years in the continual flow of remakes and sequels.

It has always been a source of amazement to this reviewer that WHITE ZOMBIE did not receive the high accolades that contemporary critics lavished on both DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN, for WHITE ZOMBIE undoubtedly possesses all of the properties which made the Universal forerunners the great films they were. The well-constructed score (with the justifiably distinguished horror classics of the '30's); the grand atmosphere of remoteness and gloom; the magnificent acting of Bela Lugosi; and the uniqueness in presenting yet another supernatural legend on the screen. WHITE ZOMBIE had all of these elements going for it, and more. Unlike the early Universals, WHITE ZOMBIE was not essentially a stage play set to film. Quite the contrary, in fact, for many of its sequences are photographed in exterior settings, thereby developing a much more sinister aura. Furthermore, the thriller utilized an immensely appropriate musical score which reinforced the overall mood of the picture just as the sinister scores aided the mood of the DARKER OF DARKS and KING KONG. Each of these elements separately leaves little doubt that WHITE ZOMBIE is not only a great film, but a superior film which equals and betters many of the more famous gothic films of the time.

In presenting the zombie on film, WHITE ZOMBIE's scripter, Garnett Weston, faithfully adapted many of the actual legends combining them with characteristics which are not at all harmful or nonsensical. It is interesting that the zombies used by legend in his mill are all black, while his bodyguard is composed of white zombies. Unlike the films of this type that were to follow, WHITE ZOMBIE gave its creatures something of a personality, an individuality almost always missing in the later films. This is stressed in the appearance of each actor, his costume and past occupation. Their introduction to Beaumont by Legendre is both sinister and ironically comical (the executioner who almost executed the sorcerer!). Jack Pierce, famed makeup man for Universal films from the late '20's until the late '40's, applied his intricately designed designs to the faces of a dozen bodyguards drawing and shading to suggest the rotting, haggard beings these creatures supposedly were.

Weston's screenplay faithfully depicted the

zombie according to the Haitian superstitions and voodoo practices. His most interesting development was in having Legendre transmit mental commands to his slaves by clapping his hands together and establishing a linkage between his brain and their undead minds. Usually, his hands were clasped only lightly. But his grip tightened as more and more power had to be asserted, as in the case where he commands Madeline to kill her lover. Without this mental exchange between zombie and master, the slaves failed to function. When Legendre is momentarily knocked unconscious, the zombies lost control of their movements and blindly plummet over the cliff. A second implement in the script seems to be indirectly related to Seabrook's own discovery that the zombies he saw were little more than dull-witted idiots. Black magician Legendre does not merely create his zombies by re-ensouling them from their graves; he is able to create a type of semi-zombie subservient to his will through his own magical prowess. He manages this through the use of a strange drug. When Madeline inhales the scent, her mind goes blank, but she is hardly an actual zombie, since she has only appeared to die. Similarly, Beaumont does not die from the drugged wine. Rather, his mind slowly disintegrates, leaving him a vegetable whose last glimmer of humanity enables him to destroy his master in the concluding reel.

The question arises, therefore, whether or not one must be dead to fit the definition of a zombie. Apparently such is not the case in *WHITE ZOMBIE*, but such liberties in the script do not in any way destroy the sincerity or the (for the most part) authentic depiction of the zombie.

The films abounds with fine touches. The opening introduction with its eerie burial is ingeniously devised. The stealing of the heroine's scarf by the villainous Murderer, and the subsequent ceremony he performs with the wax candle lend a horrible reality to the film. The burning of the image seems to be symbolic of the fusing of the victim's mental capacities to those of the sorcerer's--the final seal of the voodoo master's power over his victim. Perhaps that also partly explains why Beaumont never falls completely under Legendre's will. It is only during the last moments of the film that Legendre begins to carve the doll which, when burned, will give him complete control over Beaumont by destroying his ability to think or remember.

Other touches includes dialog which tries to give more reality to the proceedings. The quoting of the Penal Code by Bruner, for example,

and his tracing of the ancient practices. Much of this is, of course, pure nonsense, so because the film takes the material seriously, so can we. At least one can realize that it is not tongue-in-cheek or satirical horror (which later films such as Universal's *THE RAVEN* have often been accused of). Another highly interesting but puzzling question is the one which crops up concerning the relationship between Legendre and "pet" vulture, which Beaumont realises is Legendre's familiar. Exactly what the bird represents in relation to Legendre, or to the plot, is unclear. At a showing of the film in New York, the author asked film historian William K. Everson if he found any

meaning in this relationship. Everson replied that he had once put the same question to Lugosi personally, and the actor bluntly replied, "It's simple! Transmigration of souls!" What Lugosi meant is open to interpretation. Could Legendre simply have dominated this bird as he had his human victims? Or is the bird a manifestation of a demon or dark spirit which serves the "white werlock"? The question appears unanswerable, and is another unique element which makes *WHITE ZOMBIE* highly interesting viewing, even today.

The adaption of *zombism* to the screen in *WHITE ZOMBIE* was admirably supported by production and technical values which emerge as simply amazing in light that the film was produced on a shoestring budget. The combination of exterior settings, sound stage sets and special effects was startling. The actor-remancer's castle dwelling, looking as if it were actually hewn from the rocky cliff itself, was nothing more than a glass painting. The same sort of effect was then being used to prominent advantage in *RKO's THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME*, and the as yet unreleased *KING KONG*. Even the shots within Legendre's castle, displaying a magnificently vaulted ceiling supported by several gothic arches, made use of the same method of creating atmospheric interior for *DRACULA*. The interior shot

is extremely difficult to discern as a glass painting, even though the only real objects in the room are two or three chairs, the table and the staircase. Another excellent use of this effect was in the scene in which Madeline rushes from the castle's entrance near the end of the film. Again the castle is no more than realistically painted, and it is remarkable how similar this shot is to one of the ancient ruins in the 1970 release, *THE DUNWICH HORROR*. Even though the films are separated by a span of nearly 40 years, the glass shot in *WHITE ZOMBIE* is the equal to the one in the Am-



erican-International film.

Not all of the atmosphere in WHITE ZOMBIE was created by trickery. The graveyard, with its unkempt shrubbery and many graves was visually effective, as was the presentation of the Haitian countryside in the few jungle scenes. Although most of the technical artifice were indiscriminately grouped together under the title of "Art and Technique", some names automatically stand out. Jack Pierce is probably the most notable of the group, although Ralph Berger is identifiable as the art director of such later films as RUCK ROEGERS. He may well have been responsible for the coffin through glass shots, but more probably worked on creating the graveyard and other interiors and exterior sets. Of the credited technicians, cinematographer Arthur Martinelli deserves high praise for his truly beautiful camera work, such as the shot of the zombie procession moving slowly over the dark, grave-covered hill bearing Madeline's coffin above them. In the foreground of this sequence is a goat hanging from a tree. This is a voodoo warning mentioned in Seabrook's book, and which was used later for a much greater effect in Lewton's I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE. In WHITE ZOMBIE, it is one of the many minor authentic touches. There are brilliant examples of the crew's attempt to compensate for the restrictions of a low budget. In the scene in the Haitian cafe, the set is a simple table and chair at which the actor sat while gaudy music blares and dancing shadows of unseen couples flicker against the wall. The audience's interest in Neil and his illusion for Madeline, coupled with this creative camera effect, makes up for the cheapness of the scene.

Further examples of special effects which were used to creatively advance a supernatural mood were the split-screen effect and the use of double exposure. The superimposition of Legendre's burning eyes over the screen as the carriage bearing the young lovers draws away from the native burial was later used in the Halperin movie THE ZOMBIES, and in Lugosi's film for British Pathé, 1939, THE DARK RITE OF LONDON (released here by Monogram in 1940 as THE HUMAN MONSTER), but in neither case was the effect so startling or meaningful. The eyes identify the unknown character as evil, and draw the audience's curiosity toward him. Legendre's malignant features are superimposed over the face of Madeline preparing to drink the elixir, obviously over-dramatic, but climactic in bringing the sequence to its full power. The audience realizes that Madeline is about to fall into the sorcerer's power, but Legendre's satanic visage confirms this and is poetically appropos to the dialog ("I see Death!"). The touch is so expertly conceived that one is fascinated by it.

The split-screen is another primitive camera trick, but it is so seldom found in a good thriller (or, for that matter, in any thriller) that it is another most welcome ingredient in WHITE ZOMBIE. Its major use comes when Neil, exhausted and sick from fever, is lying beneath a tree far below the wide castle. Suddenly, a brilliant light reveals that Madeline is near. This realization is greatly heightened by the picturization of Madeline in the upper left of the screen, looking off from a balcony. Neil is pictured asleep in the lower right, while the entire castle hovers between the two. One appreciates the artistic attempt to strengthen the thought of love separated by evil.

WHITE ZOMBIE's pressbook revealed that the Halperins attempted to make a film based on what was thought to be the most interesting topics to film-goers of the day. Since surveys seemed to indicate that audiences of this period favored mystery films with elements of the fantastic and occult, and which were set in foreign locales, the producers were determined to make a film that seemed to be the combination of what seemed to be in place, stock music, and music that appears partly original. Unlike other contemporary efforts in this genre, the theme music is relevant to the story and does not fade out at the conclusion of the opening credits.

The title is spelled out, letter-by-letter, to the individual drum beats in a native death chant, and the music continues throughout that opening scene. It picks up again when Legendre steps into a garden to carry out the voodoo drill that was possible through the "screeching of the vulture and Lugosi's leering expressions (alone enough to sustain dramatic impact) do much to reinforce the scene, Abe Meyer's musical arrangement definitely heightens the overall effect. Arthur Lennig revealed that the orchestra of WHITE ZOMBIE was small (possibly an octet), and aptly points out the effect of its action. "The music played the special and difficult impression of being demonic." He further reveals that the music is occasionally derivative of Saint-Saens' "Dance Macabre," and has a tone very similar to an 1840 orchestration. This is most appropriate to the other dated modes of filmmaking utilized in the picture. It is most demonic in several sequences, most notably the one involving Legendre's triumph over Beaumont with the drugged wine, and the latter's subsequent realization of the horrible fate in store for him. In direct contrast, the music often displays a subtle charm. Carlos Clarens' book points out that the humming theme of the natives which is played during the scenes in which the maids argue, "finishing first the castle is called 'Listen to the Lambs.' Whatever its source, it is strangely and strongly reminiscent of the black culture's music in the antebellum South. An argument might well be advanced that the musical transitions between scenes are not at all smoothly accomplished, yet it seems incontestable that the overall result can only be regarded as one of the most impressively macabre scores ever to support a gothic horror film.

The acting in WHITE ZOMBIE is closely parallel to the film's technical merits and faults. It is dated; at times gloriously melodramatic and in tune with the spirit of the tale; at other times, most unattractive and poor. However, it should be remembered that over the years the acting on the whole appears no worse than that contained in a great many films from the '30's which were then considered to be first class pictures.

Lugosi triumphs in WHITE ZOMBIE. We can recall his other great performances: DRACULA (certainly his most famed characterization), MURDER IN THE RUE MORGUE, BORIS IN CHAINED THE MAGICIAN, VITUS Werdegant in THE BLACK CAT, Orloff in THE HUMAN MONSTER and his two Ygor characterizations. His height in melodramatic villainy undoubtedly came with Universal's THE RAVEN, in which he played the insane genius, Richard Volin. However, taking all of the roles of his career into consideration, it is with the role of Murder Legendre that Lugosi achieved his all-time greatest portrayal of evil. In fact, the necromancer is of such classic proportions, that it should rank as one of the greatest screen villains in history. Director Victor Halperin managed to successfully curb Lugosi's common tendency to overact, and the result is a deliciously thrilling and melodramatic performance. Candidates for criticism as his role of Volin in THE RAVEN frequently become. When Lugosi worked with a competent director in a sincere film he was always in top form. But when he was ill-directed, or when direction was non-existent (as it appeared to be in the later Monogram and independent films), Lugosi was unable to develop his characterizations properly. It is also interesting to note, before proceeding into a discussion of Murder Legendre, that Lugosi only received a flat sum of \$800 for this role in a film which made millions for its producers. He had taken the role immediately after his two-picture contract with Universal (for DRACULA and one other film, which turned out to be MURDER IN THE RUE MORGUE) had expired. Lugosi and his agents had refused to sign a long-term contract when Universal had failed to offer the actor enough money.

Unlike many of the mad doctors and inhuman fiends Lugosi was to play within the long course of his career, the character of Murder Legendre was an immensely mysterious and complex. And it is a credit to Lugosi's talents that he was able to develop so many facets into the role. We first see Legendre with his back toward the camera as the young lovers' carriage approaches him from out of the darkness. He ignores the driver's questions, slowly creeping up to the window where his satanic features are first revealed. His somber formal dress,

combined with the pointed hairline, dark mustache and goatee add to the development of his strange personality. He approaches the lovers silently, and his hand slowly strokes over the scarf such in the same way that a snake approaches its victim--with its eyes mesmerizing as it slowly inches forth. In the scene with Beaumont at the cune hall, Legendre exudes an evil aura, as well as an air of uncompromising superiority. At their second meeting, in the graveyard, the necromancer's black humor displays itself within the context of his lengthy introduction of his zombie bodyguard, "And this is Chauvin, the High Executioner who almost executed me!" The wizard stresses his last words to illustrate that he has had his revenge and indicate that he is such a powerful emissary of evil that he can afford to sneer at humanity. Beaumont appears not to notice their first two meetings, apparently believing that he is above the sorcerer's wrath. Foolishly, he brings his love and his servants to live within the spider's web. It is only after he drinks the dragged wine that he realizes what is happening. Legendre indicates that he has "taken a fancy" to Beaumont, and his use of words is filled with contempt and taunting; they are mere toys in comparison to his powers. By conquering Beaumont and taking "Beauty's Queen", the pure and innocent Madeline, for himself, he may feel that he can re-enter humanity at its highest level.

Lugosi shares in some short dialog exchange with Robert Frazer, in whom he watches his former employer mentally disintegrate into a nonentity. He performs the final act of changing Beaumont into a living zombie--carving the voodoo doll--and as Beaumont struggles to lift his hand to let it fall on Legendre's in a last attempt to implore the fiend to release Madeline from her fate, Legendre finally lifts his own hand to strike. He strikes Beaumont of their first encounter when Beaumont refused to shake hands with him. His tone might almost imply that he feels pity for his victim, but he has become so accustomed to denying humans the right to live that it is doubtful whether Beaumont's actions have even the slightest effect on his emotions.

Robert Frazer, in his supporting role of Beaumont, manages to give his equally complex character a treatment which is as melodramatically effective and satisfying as Lugosi's. Arthur Lanning accurately termed Beaumont a "Byronic" figure, for Charles Beaumont is a romanticist who is willing to lose all for love. For the first time, he takes his character with distaste in the first portion of the film, as he seeks the powers of evil to deliver the heroine into his hands. But later, as he realizes what he has done, he tries to rectify the situation even at the price of losing Madeline. At this point he gains the audience's sympathy and, as he finally falls under Legendre's spell and explodes with the monster, not for himself, but for the girl, one may even be right in saying that his character is of such nobility that he deserves the girl far more than Neil--her "true love"--who has suffered little in comparison. Frazer brings to the role the revelation of dealing with Legendre; the air of his devil--of evil, the power he will use all in his power to achieve his end; and the degradation of the pitiful thing he becomes under the influence of the potion. Frazer was a leading man in the silent era, but with sound he was reduced to playing second-string supporting roles in 'B' films. He turned up in Majestic's THE VAMPIRE BEAT the following year, and in the same role, despite the ill-treatment given to many of Hollywood's most accomplished performers--a fate that was to be, of course, Bela Lugosi's.

The remainder of the cast is adequate. By this I mean that they do not aid the film to any great extent, nor do they detract from it. The pressbook reveals that Wade Boteler attempted to raise her voice for dialogue, yet in the film she fails miserably; her high-pitched voice disclosing her inability to perform such roles convincingly. John Harron fares somewhat better as the hapless hero who, in the best Universal tradition (although not as handsome as David Manners), always found himself bested by the villain and completely dependent on the clever doctor. Harron is over-acted in places where the story would call for the opposite effect. Joseph Cawthorne's Doctor Bruner is hardly an equal to any of Edward Van

Sloan's similar performances. He does, however, make the most of his comical lines, and is not a hindrance to the picture. One does question his frequent stutterings and repetitions of lines, which do little to add to the character's dimensions.

Brandon Hurst as Silver and Clarence Muse as the native driver stand out in their minor roles. Hurst's butler is not the usual silent servant, but a counselor to his employer and a man unafraid to stand up to even the likes of Murder Legendre. The semi-ritualistic death of Silver as the unusual highlight of the film, as is Muse's explanation of what a zombie is and his sighting of the undead beings coming toward him. It is unfortunate that the script never followed up on having Muse appear later as yet another victim of Legendre's power.

All of the "white zombies" appear well-cast. Frederick Peters and George Page MacManan are the only credited zombies in the film. In fact, sources are usually incorrect in giving credit to a John Peters as playing Chauvin, and spelling MacManan's name incorrectly. These mistakes were repeated in the pressbook, but corrected on the screen. Peters had earlier appeared with Karloff in the '37 TARIAN AND THE DOOM OF LION, and the badly-dressed Chauvin as powerful as Legendre's description of him. MacManan gave a horrifying portrayal of Van Gelder, especially in the lengthy scene in which he leads Beaumont to his master's came film. Other cast members were good in their respective roles.

WHITE ZOMBIE was made in 1932, but over the years it has achieved a readership as a romantic and gothic as its theme. Its acting styles and technical facilities are admittedly primitive, but so, too, are they unique. Although the film may well be criticized for striving for over-melodramatic horrors, it succeeds well in the attempt; certainly as well as DRACULA or FRANKENSTEIN. And because of many unique properties, it is a significant acting of Lugosi in the key role; the superior photographic effects and macabre settings; the limited but meaty dialog; the lack of offensive comedy and the stress on age-old gothicism and romanticism, it may always be fondly regarded as one of the finest--if not the finest--gothic horror film from the era of the 1930's.

# REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES

In the years immediately following the release of WHITE ZOMBIE, the zombie lay dormant, perhaps because a copyright held on the name by the Amusement Corporation (for whom the film was made) had made the film forbid any other production company or studio from using the term. This was the identical practice adopted by Universal with respect to both Dracula and Frankenstein. A number of low-budget quickies, which have seldom seen the light of day since, emerged around this time which contained elements of voodooism. Columbia released a short in 1935 entitled VOODOO ISLAND, and Principal Adventure Pictures released a sort of adventure film which purported to be semi-documentary in nature, and was known simply as VOODOO (1933). Neither of these were, however, zombie-oriented. DRING O'VOODOO (also known as LOUISIANA) saw a limited release through international exhibitors during 1934, and Columbia released a Fox War-Jax Hit co-starrer by the name of BLACK MOON that same year. Both lacked the Haitian monster.

A mysterious film which no reference book or researcher I have consulted seems to know anything about is OUNGA, which Denis Gifford includes in his zombie checklist as a Paramount film of 1934. Directed by George Twigg with Fred Washington and Sheldon Leonard (the famed gangster heavy and tv producer). Extensive research has been fruitless, and we invite readers who may have a knowledge of this film to share it with all of us.

In 1936, the Halperin brothers attempted to re-create their initial success with REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES which emerged as quite a different carbon-copy of WHITE ZOMBIE in terms of characters, dialog and theme, but lacked the classical elements which made the earlier film a cinematic triumph. Arthur Martinelli and Abe Meyer again added their technical capabilities to the film, but the result is a pot-boiler which can hardly be placed on a level with the Monogram film.

The picture opens with some confusing sequences set on the Franco-Austrian frontier during the last months of World War 1. A group of zombie soldiers

advance against a hail of bullets to put the enemy to rout. Later, an oriental priest, chaplain of a French colonial regiment, is condemned to life imprisonment because he possesses the power of turning men into senseless automatons, acting only in accordance with his will. Colonel Mazovia (Roy D'Arcy) hides himself in the priest's prison cell and rescues a parchment containing the location of the secret formula which the priest attempted to burn. After the war is over, an expedition composed of representatives from all the Allied countries come to Cambodia to destroy the secret of the zombies. Colonel Mazovia is a member of this expedition, as are Armand Louque (Dean Jagger), a student of dead languages; Clifford Grayson (Robert Noland), an Englishman; General Duval (George Cleveland) and his daughter, Claire (Dorothy Stone). The shy and diffident Armand falls in love with Claire, who accepts his proposal of marriage in order to spite Clifford, whom she really loves. Later, when the three are working near each other, Claire reveals her love for Clifford and Armand frees her from their engagement. As a result of "accidents" (caused by the wily Mazovia), and the refusal of the natives to work for the whites, the expedition returns to the base at Pnom Penh. However, when Armand discovers a previously overlooked clue, he sneaks back

to Angkor against orders. In the temple at Angkor the scholar views an ancient ceremony, and later follows one of the native servants of the high priest out of the temple and through a swamp to a bronze doorway. After the servant leaves the mysterious place, Armand accidentally strikes a gong held by a strange idol and, in doing so, a panel in the wall opens to reveal a small metal tablet. As Armand translates the inscription, he realizes that it is the secret for which they have all been searching. When he returns to the expedition he is dismissed by his superior for insubordination and, hence, goes mad. He turns his servant into a zombie, and soon thereafter gains control over all the members of the expedition, making them obey his every command. By threatening Clifford, he forces Claire to consent to marry him, but finally comes to realize that he can never really force her to love him. Despairing of ever obtaining the one thing he most desires, Armand relinquishes his power and liberates the zombies from their semi-death, destroying both himself and the ancient secret.

As can easily be discerned from the synopsis, the picture is lacking in both sincerity and in authenticity. Amusement Securities Corporation (for whom the Halperins had produced WHITE ZOMBIE) sought to obtain a court injunction and damages



REVENGE OF THE ZOMBIES



amounting to the sum of \$60,000 from Academy Films when they attempted to release the film in Manhattan's Rialto Theatre. However, the court ruled that the term did not belong solely to Paramount Securities, and the picture opened on schedule. It is nevertheless interesting to note that when REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES was eventually released in Brooklyn, it was under the title REVOLT OF THE DEMONS, possibly because of the court action with which the Rialto had been involved. [See Gary Collins' article, "Court to a Closeout" for a more detailed review of REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES.]

#### THE GHOST BREAKERS

Although the debasement of Dracula and Frankenstein's Monster was not to take place until the release of ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN in 1948, the zombie suffered a much quicker decline by serving as a monstrous foil to the antics of comedian Bob Hope in a lushly-mounted Paramount thriller of 1940 entitled THE GHOST BREAKERS. The film was a follow-up to the 1939 Paramount comedy-thriller, THE CAT AND THE CANARY (also starring Hope and Paulette Goddard) and, like THE CAT AND THE CANARY, was a remake of an earlier film. Lasky features had filmed the title in 1914, and when Lasky joined with Paramount and Famous Players, the studio adapted the Paul Dickson-Charles Goddard stage play, THE GHOST BREAKER (not plural), into a film starring Wallace Reid. Essentially, this 1922 silent version was the same as the 1940 version. A young heiress is protected by her suitor in a supposedly haunted castle, but in neither the 1914 nor 1922 version are there any zombies present.

Briefly, Hope plays Larry Lawrence, a radio commentator whose frequent remarks against gangsters finally force him to leave town. He accidentally traps himself in Mary Carter's (Paulette Goddard) trunk, and by the time he manages to make his presence known, he is on a ship bound for Cuba. Miss Carter has inherited a supposedly haunted castle, and Lawrence offers to go along as her protector. Anthony Quinn turns up in a dual role throughout these proceedings, but the horror does not begin until they reach the island. There, Paramount's art director Hans Dreier (assisted by Robert Usher) created not only the spooky castle settings, but an eerie native hut in which an old woman (Virginia Brissac) lived with her zombie son (well played by Noble Johnson—famed specialist in horror roles). Larry manages to foil the prowling zombie, and reveals the whole thing as an evil plot by Miss Carter's supposed friend, Geoff Montgomery (a young Richard Carlson). In the conclusion, Montgomery meets a horrible finish and the island is found to be the source of a fortune in mineral deposits, but the supernatural presence of the castle's femme spirit and the zombie are left unexplained.

On the whole, THE GHOST BREAKERS is a reworking of the "old dark house" theme with comedy overtones and a zombie for local color. It is certainly not a film in which the monster ever dominates the action, nor is its appearance an integral part of the story by any means. But when the gaunt and brutish Noble Johnson lumbers down the stairs in the latter half of the film, a genuine shudder moment appears in an otherwise mediocre film.

#### TOTAL DEBASEMENT: THE MONOGRAM ZOMBIES

It is most unfortunate but perhaps accurate to state that often cited as chief representatives of the zombie sub-genre are two-grade 'C' to 'D', depending upon one's taste) cheapies produced by the infamous Monogram Studios. Although the zombie had gotten a magnificent introduction to the cinema in WHITE ZOMBIE, later pictures did little to enhance the creature to become as famed a monster as the vampire or werewolf.

Universal's 1939 serial, BUCK ROGERS, automated the Haskins creation by having killer Kane turn into "zombies" with a special helmet. Another lesser film, which nary a soul has heard of, is a 1942 Astor picture entitled THE LOVE WANGA. It was in no way related to the earlier and mysterious GUANGA, although both spellings refer

to a voodoo charm used for various purposes (love, revenge, etc.). This film reportedly contains elements of both black magic and zombieism. Monogram's first entry into the field was KING OF THE ZOMBIES, produced during 1941 and released prior to the December attack on Pearl Harbor. The film was directed by Jean Yarbrough (also known as Yarbrough, and who directed many horror films from the Rondo Hatton HOUSE OF HORRORS up to such recent trash as HILLSHILLS IN A HAUNTED HOUSE), and tried to combine a racial success formula with the "old dark house" comic relief and even Nazi villains.

The film opens within the cockpit of a small aircraft low on fuel and lost somewhere over the Caribbean. The occupants of the plane are Bill Summers (John Archer), "Mac" McCarthy (Dick Purcell), and Jefferson Jackson (comedian Mantan Moreland), Summers' valet. Unable to make contact with anyone below, the radio suddenly becomes alive with a faint and obscure message in German obviously transmitted from an island directly below. Crash-landing the plane in the jungle, the trio make their way through the undergrowth to an old house where they are cordially greeted by the island's master who introduces himself as Doctor Miklos Sangre (Henry Victor). He explains that he and his family are refugees from the Nazis and he wishes the scientists of a radio on the island, but offers them the hospitality of his home. Some time later, while Sangre entertains Bill and Mac over drinks, Jeff discovers that the island is over-run with zombies who are described by the pert young servant Samantha (Marguerite Whitten) as "Dead folks...that walks around". Samantha and old Tahama, the cook (Madame Sul-ze-van), have but to clap their hands to have the zombies march in for their evening dinner. From this point on, the story becomes an incohesive farce. Jeff tries to convince Bill and Mac of the existence of the zombies but, predictably, they choose to believe the Testonic Sangre who denies it. Sangre introduces his wife Alyce (Patricia Stacy), a beautiful woman suffering from a strange malady which has left her seemingly unconscious, feeble, and Barbara Winslow (Joan Woodbury), his niece by marriage (in the old Hollywood tradition—innocent heroines could never be directly related to the awful villain). As the night (and the picture) wear on, there are the usual nocturnal appearances of glasse-eyed zombies and even a mysterious (if senseless) visit by Madame Sangre. It doesn't take long for anyone except for the Americans in the film to realize that Sangre is in the employ of a foreign government (Hollywood's code term for Nazi Germany) to extract secrets from naval Admiral Mainwright (Guy Usher), whom he has prisoner. Using voodoo, Sangre and Tahama expect to perform a "Rite of Transmigration", or a transfer of information from Mainwright's mind into Madame Sangre's. While this is going on, Bill and Mac discover that their plane's radio is missing, and Mac goes off in search of it. Sangre hypnotizes Jeff and an unconvincing sequence after which the skittish servant is convinced that he has died and become a zombie. In another part of the house, Bill finds Barbara hypnotizing her aunt and immediately confuses her actions as men-acing. Suddenly, Mac turns up with the same malady that Madame Sangre suffers with. Sangre, in the island's other physician, Doctor Couille (Lawrence Criner), who examines Mac and states that he has been dead since morning. After this announcement, hardly anything comes as a surprise. Jeff learns that he is not a zombie when his appetite is repelled by the tasteless brew that the real zombies digest, and rejoins Bill. Together they discover Madame Sangre's corpse and Mac's empty coffin. Following the sound of native drums, they arrive in time to see Sangre presiding over a huge voodoo ceremony in which he is using Barbara as his unwilling assistant. Just as his "Rite of Transmigration" is about to succeed, Summers and Jeff crash into the gathering, whereupon the necromancer/Nazi commands his zombie corps to destroy the intruders. But for no apparent reason, Mac and the other zombies turn toward Sangre who panics and fires point-blank into their midst. The bullets fail to have any effect on Sangre and the others, and Sangre is forced back until he finally falls to his death in a fiery pit. Later, Mac is back to normal, recovering from his bullet wounds (although how he managed to survive then is never explained, nor, for that matter, why the

zombies turned against their master; nor what happens to the other zombies) and Mainwright is thanking the Americans for a job well done.

KING OF THE ZOMBIES is hardly a good film by any means, but it does possess a few qualities deserving of mention. Henry Victor, the English-born actor who had starred in the classic PEAKS, and who specialized in essaying German bandleaders, admirably played his role "straight," giving the ridiculous story a greater interest that it would have had without him. Edward Kay's original score is highly effective in several scenes combining the eerie with the lonely, and of note is that it was nominated for an academy award! That certainly must have been a "first" (and, probably, a "last") for Monogram. The studio's long-time art director, Dave Milton, created adequate settings, considering a more-than-meets-the-eye budget, but the remainder of the technical departments (including Varborough's direction) delivered little or nothing to the film's very minor success (if one might call it that in comparison to the many later bombs of the '50's and '60's). Perhaps the ingredient which holds up best over the years is Mantan Moreland's comical portrayal of a semi-zombie. When ordered to join the ranks, the black comedian responds, "Move over boys, I'm one of the gang now." Funny? Again, a matter of opinion. It certainly hurts the gothic aspects and seriousness of the picture, but does help spare us from more sundry moments of bad horror. The remainder of the cast seen scarcely interested, and one can hardly blame them. In all, the first of Monogram's zombie pictures is a barely passable entry, but it would certainly be unfair to condemn it in the same breath as something akin to THE GIANT LEECHES or THE EYE CREATURES.

REVENGE OF THE ZOMBIES followed two years later. Having been able to procure the talents of such macabre specialists as Bela Lugosi and George Zucco, Monogram worked to degenerate famed Shakespearean actor John Carradine in a similar fashion. The plot for this was the KING OF THE ZOMBIES's screenplay seen as masterpiece of construction, even though it used the same dull formula. The plot, such as it was, made use of the same one or two jungle sets, the identical low-key photography, and a new score by Edward Kay which lacked the high-pitched interest that the previous score had occasionally reached.

Larry Adams (Robert Lowery), Mauritz Hugo (Scott Warrington), and secretary Jennifer (Mantan Moreland) arrive at the home of Doctor Keating (Barry McCollum) after hearing of the death of Larry's sister, Lila (Veda Ann Borg). Lila, who had married Doctor Max Von Altermann (John Carradine), passed away suddenly, and as Von Altermann has refused to allow Keating to see her, the physician has a suspicion that she may have been poisoned. Larry suggests (for a reason that makes little sense) that he and Scott switch names when they introduce themselves to Von Altermann while they attempt to see if they can discover the true cause of Lila's death. Entering Von Altermann's house, Keating, Adams and Warrington are met by the doctor's secretary, Jennifer Rand (Gale Stern), who reveals her admiration for her employer. Von Altermann enters the scene and has Jennifer prepare rooms for the guests before the funeral commences. There's the same by-play between Jeff and the zombies, in this case a fellow by the name of Lazarus (James Baskett) who remarks to Jeff over the car he drives, "Beautiful car. I drove a car like this for master." "Yes?" replies Jeff. "When I was alive," he adds. The local Sheriff (Bob Steele) arrives shortly after, and it is revealed that he is a Nazi agent who is working closely with Von Altermann on the latter's experiments. His goal is to develop a new army of zombies which will not be stopped by bullets and will be, in fact, invincible. Firing a bullet point-blank into his zombie wife, Von Altermann succeeds in quelling the Sheriff's skepticism. He further points to Lazarus as yet another of his creations. However, as he continues to rave about an invincible army, he is shocked to hear hollow-sounding "No!" from the lips of his dead wife's lips. He remarks that he must continue to experiment on her, so that her brain will be capable of only receiving and obeying orders, rather than questioning them. Von Altermann wills Lila to remain in her dead state, but her will is

strong enough so that she rises on her own power and disappears into the jungle. Larry discovers Von Altermann's secret, and the doctor locks him in a closet. Jeff frees him, and the pair convince old Mammy Beulah (Madame Sul-te-wan) to aid them in their fight against her master. She calls to Lila (in a high, wailing moan) who comes and tells Larry that only her husband's death can free her. Larry promises to help but is dragged by the doctor that evening. Von Altermann drags Scott away for his experiments while the Sheriff watches Larry. Having only feigned unconsciousness, Larry is surprised to learn that the Sheriff is an American double-agent, and the two of them move at once to apprehend the crazed Von Altermann. The Nazi scientist calls out his zombies to stop them, but Lila appears and her will power triumphs; the zombies slowly lumber toward the petrified doctor. Von Altermann escapes from his undead creations, but in fleeing through the treacherous swampslands, both he and his zombie wife perish in quicksand.

REVENGE OF THE ZOMBIES was followed by another Monogram semi-zombie film in 1944: WOODOO MAN. The picture was one of ten that Ben Lugosi made for that studio, the other being THE MISTLETORE WITCH (1935), INVISIBLE GHOST (1941), SPOOKS RUN WILD (1941), BLACK DRAGONS (1942), BOWERY AT MIDNIGHT (1942), THE CORPSE VANISHES (1942), THE APE MAN (1943), GHOSTS ON THE LOOSE (1943) and RETURN OF THE APE MAN (1944).

BOWERY AT MIDNIGHT had cast Lugosi in the dual role of respectable college professor by day and notorious criminal by night. He liquidated most of his underlings when they became too curious and/or greedy. Escaping from the police in the force-filled climax, his maniacal old assistant ("Once a great doctor; now a human derelict!") leads him to a trapdoor that opens to a graveyard. There Lugosi meets a horrible death at the hands of all his old underlings, revived by the crazy old man! Although hardly real zombies, the revived corpses are yet another illustration of variations of the zombie theme.

In WOODOO MAN Lugosi fared somewhat better, its plot being more serious (though hardly more believable) than the typical Monogram potboiler. Young women have been disappearing mysteriously near the town of Twin Falls. A retired physician, Doctor Richard Marlowe (Lugosi), lives near the small village with his wife, who suffers the same wail as did Henry Victor's spouse in KING OF THE ZOMBIES. A young scriptwriter, Ralph Dawson (Michael Amer), becomes involved when a girl from whom he hitches a ride disappears near Marlowe's home. Dawson and the abducted girl's sister, Betty Benton (Wanda McKay), report the disappearance to the local authorities, then journey out to the Marlowe residence. They devise a plan to locate Betty's missing sister, but Betty herself disappears within the Marlowe walls. Ralph and the police arrive and break into a room where Marlowe and his assistant, Nicholas (George Zucco), are performing a voodoo ceremony over Betty and the doctor's wife. Marlowe had kidnapped the girls for the purpose of bringing his wife back to normal, for which he needs a girl with the exact mental plane that his wife formerly had. After failing on the others, the girls had become normal and were put in an upright coffin-closets and attended to by the dim-witted Job (John Carradine's all-time degrading role--worse than his ASTRO-ZOMBIES or BLOOD OF BRACHIA'S CASTLE). As the police interrupt his final attempt at restoring his wife to normalcy, Marlowe is shot, but before he dies he destroys his wife and releases the other girls from their zombie-like state.

With the release of WOODOO MAN, Monogram's zombie series came to a welcome conclusion. 1944 heralded a drastic cut-back in Monogram's horror features as well and, since their past films were hardly passable and are only interesting today for their unintentional comedy, it is fortunate that their progress was halted for the most part near the end of the war.

#### 1 WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE

While Monogram Pictures were cheaply reviving the zombie in grade 'C' melodramas such as KING OF THE ZOMBIES and REVENGE OF THE ZOMBIES, RKO Radio Pictures' executives appointed former studio Story Editor Val Lewton to head, as producer, a series

of planned 'B' horror vehicles with the intent to capitalize on the fantastic public appetite for thrillers and escapist fantasies which had then reached an all-time highwater mark with the advent of World War II. Lewton, along with his most prominent associates, director Jacques Tourneur, writer DeWitt Bodeen and film editor Mark Robson, was determined to avoid the exploitable and cliché brand of horror film; these men were united in their purpose to bring originality to the genre which had, for the most part, run its course with the many, many films inspired by the success of the early '30's classics. As with the Halperins, the talented group agreed that dialogue should not dominate the picture; instead they felt that visual actions and sound effects should advance the overall mood. And although the Lewton films continually had to bear the use of titles such as CAT PEOPLE, THE LEOPARD MAN and CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE -- titles which seemingly bespeak what the producer was determined to avoid -- Lewton's films always stressed the public's fear of the unknown. Lewton's first film, CAT PEOPLE, was a grand success at the box office, and even before it had concluded filming Lewton was handed his followup assignment: an adaptation of a magazine article by Janet Wallace entitled "I Walked with a Zombie." Once more studio bosses had sought to force an exploitable title on Lewton, but he easily foiled their efforts by bringing them what he himself termed as "Jane Byrne in the West Indies."

"I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE" opens with a romantic, almost humorous charm in the form of a narration. It is seemingly bare of macabre, but as with all Lewton films, there is to be found an underlying premise of terrors to come. As the credits fade from the screen, and while ocean waves calmly pound against a desolate beach, this light voice of the film's heroine (portrayed by Frances Dee) delivers the short prelude: "I walked with a zombie!" she laughs...It is a soft, tinkling laughter (reminiscent of the ghostly laughter in the as-yet-unmade THE UNDISCOVERED). Then the voice continues, "Doesn't seem an odd thing to say. If anyone had said that to me a year ago, I'm not at all sure if I would have known what a zombie was! Ah well, I might have had some notion that...he was strange and frightening...even a little funny. It all began in such an ordinary way..."

Indeed, the narration is constructed as though it might have been an extract from a young woman's diary (or a magazine article!) and the picture then dissolves into an employment office somewhere in Canada. Nurse Betsy Connell (Frances Dee) is offered a position to care for the semi-invalid wife of sugar planter Paul Holland (Tom Conway) on the Isle of San Sebastian in the West Indies.

Because of the romantic possibilities such a position suggests, Betsy takes the job and immediately calls for the Caribbean. Half-way there she is met by Holland who has come to personally take her to his home. One evening on the ship, Betsy's romantic illusions are noticed by Holland who calmly proceeds to shatter them by revealing, "Everything seems beautiful because you do not understand. There's no beauty here; only death and decay. Everything beautiful dies here, even the stars."

This is the film's first indication that what appears to be is, in actuality, not so. As Miss Connell lands on the Isle of San Sebastian, a Negro relates to her that the Hollands were once an important family who originally brought the "colored folks" to the island along with "Key Misery" -- described as an old man who still lives on the island, in the garden of Port Holland, "with an arrow stuck in his back and a sorrowful look on his face." The man answers Betsy's quizzical look with the further explanation that Key Misery was the original figurehead on the first vessel which brought "the long-age mothers and fathers" of them all to the island.

Up until this point, Lewton is content to subtly suggest that beauty is not always as it outwardly implies. Holland, and the native that Betsy meets, both attempt to convince her that the past history of San Sebastian is a story that only evil and sorrow remain. Arriving at Port Holland, Betsy gets her first look at the ancient figurehead, and also meets Paul's charming and joking half-brother, Wesley Rand (James Ellison) who informs the nurse that the other members of the household include their mother (Edith Hall) and Paul's wife, Jessica (Christine Gordon), who exists in a semi-invalid state. Suddenly, the sound of jungle drums interrupt Rand's comments, but the eerie beats are explained away by Wes who informs Betsy that they merely signal that the sugar in the air is ready to be poured [an interesting point that seems to indicate obvious horror, the drums, does not; while on the other hand, the beautiful elements of the area hide a lurking evil and uncomfortable sadness. Both are typical of Lewton's style in developing suspense and horror, and it seems to be a tropical paradise a sense of forbidding loneliness]. Holland enters and a feeling of ill-will between brothers is evidenced in their cold greetings. Wes at once leaves for work at the mill. Holland politely offers to take his wife to the evening meal leaving Betsy free until the next day when beginning her job -- caring for the mysterious (and as yet unseen) Jessica, whose room lies in a stone tower across the fortress' courtyard.

Late that evening, Betsy hears a faint and hollow-sounding moan coming from the direction of the old tower. Investigating, she slowly ascends the stairs calling for Mrs. Holland. When the crying abruptly ceases, Betsy finds herself alone in the darkness of the tower, and it is then that she first spies Jessica. Holland's beautiful, but also quite horrifying in the semi-darkness, woman blends with the surroundings and fear of the unknown (nothing is actually seen, but it is Lewton's own way of presenting horror), the presence of an apparition such as the silent Jessica unnerves the young nurse who shrieks out in terror. Holland and several servants arrive almost immediately to console her, and one of the servants explains that it was only one of the servant girls who had been crying...crying over the birth of a baby! Holland attempts to explain to Betsy and the servants who was crying. He points to the old ship's figurehead in the courtyard and tells her that the natives of the island came from the misery and pain of slavery. "They found life a burden. That's why they still weep when a child is born, and make merry at the burial." I told you, Miss Connell, this is a sad place."

Up until this point, Lewton has merely formed the basis of the major theme of the story--an unholy love and the consequences it has on those involved. The morning following Betsy's incident in the tower, Holland enters, and the young woman apologizes saying that she had no idea that Jessica was mentally disturbed. "My wife is a mental case. Please remember that, Miss Connell, particularly when some of the foolish people on the island start regaling you with local legends. You will find superstition a contagious thing. Some people it get the better of them. I don't think you will."



The premiere of WHITE ZOMBIE

Holland then takes Betsy downstairs where he introduces her to Doctor Maxwell (James Bell). It is the physician who first calls Jessica by her supernatural name, when he tells Betsy, "She makes a beautiful zombie, doesn't she?" "What is a zombie?" questions the nurse. "A ghost! A living dead! It's also a drink," he adds with amusement, then goes on to partially explain Jessica's condition. "Mrs. Holland had a tropical fever; very severe. You might say that portions of her spinal cord were burned out by this fever. The result is what you see--a woman without any will power; unable to speak or even act by herself, though she will obey simple commands." When Betsy asks if Jessica suffers, Maxwell is skeptical. "I don't know. I'd rather think of her as a sleepwalker who can never be awakened, feeling nothing, knowing nothing. There's very little we can do, except keep her physically comfortable."

On her day off, Betsy walks into the quiet village nearby where she meets Wesley. The friendly young man offers to show her about, and they eventually find themselves seated at an outside cafe table. A local calypso singer (Sir Lancelot) begins to sing a song (not knowing that Rand is sitting nearby) which gives Betsy an insight into the Holland family.

*There was a family who lived on the Isle  
Of San Sebastian a long, long while,  
The head of this family was a Holland man,  
And the younger brother, his name was Rand.*

*A wee, ah wee, shame & sorrow for the family*

*The Holland man, he kept in a tower  
A wife as pretty as a big white flower.  
She saw the brother and she stole his heart,  
And that's how the evil and the trouble start.*

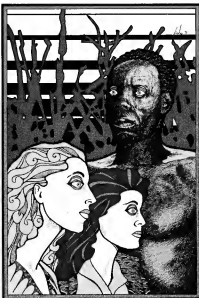
Suddenly, the singer is told that Rand is within hearing distance, as he stops to go over and present his apologies to the plantation man. Wesley tells him to get out, blaming everyone's knowledge of the scandal on his brother. He then proceeds to get drunk. Much later, Betsy tries to help the nearly unconscious Rand to his feet, when the singer returns to finish his song...

*The wife & the brother they went to go,  
By the Holland man, he told them so.  
The wife fell down on the eve of shame,  
And it burn her mind in the evil flame.*

*Her life is empty & she cannot talk,  
And the nurse has come to make her walk.  
The brothers are lonely & the nurse is young,  
And now you must see that my song is sung.*

*A wee, ah wee, shame & sorrow for the family!*

As the singer concludes his verse, an older woman steps forth to help Betsy lift Rand to



### I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE

there are better doctors at the Home-front. Elated over the prospects of curing Jessica, Betsy converses with Mrs. Rand over the possibilities of voodoo for affecting a cure, but the woman replies that there is great danger in relying on voodoo.

Nevertheless, Betsy now feels that voodoo is perhaps Jessica's only chance for recovery and goes to Alma one evening to seek directions on how to proceed to the Home-front. Leading Jessica by her hand, Betsy makes her way through the cane fields where they eventually come to a tree from which an obnoxious form of a dead goat--hangs. It is a warning that voodoo ceremonies are being conducted nearby. Further on, they spot a tall, gaunt, shadowy figure standing motionless in the pathway. The figure does not move as Betsy's flashlight hits him in his large, staring eyes. This is Carré Four, the guardian of the Home-front and, as both Jessica and Betsy wear protective patches, he allows them to pass unharmed. As they near the native gathering, drums and native chanting resound through the forest. At the Home-front, Betsy leaves the zombie-like Jessica outside while she goes into a hut to talk to the voodoo priestess who, to her surprise, turns out to be none other than Mrs. Holland! The elderly woman confesses that she fakes a belief in the powers of voodoo to fool the people into accepting medicine and aid which will benefit them, and which they would otherwise refuse. While the two women are talking, one of the natives calls Jessica with a sword. She neither responds to the sound, nor bleeds. Mutterings of "zombie" are whispered among the natives when Betsy returns to lead Jessica (who, Mrs. Holland has explained, voodoo would not cure) back to Fort Holland. When she returns, she is met by Paul who reveals that, although he thought he could say that he would like Jessica back, he does not. Unknown to all, the natives at Home-front want Jessica for their own purposes. The authorities suggest that she be sent away, but Wes demands that she be kept on the island, blaming his brother for her present condition.

Mrs. Rand now tells them that she can explain the entire matter. She says that Jessica is actually a zombie, for on the night when Jessica and Wes planned to go away, she became so insane with anger toward this woman who was tearing her family apart with her beauty, that she went to the Home-front and had a voodoo spell cast. When she returned home, Jessica was raging with fever. Maxwell attempts to rationalize this fever by naming it, and further adds, "As I understand it, in order to turn a person into a zombie, whether by poison or hocus-pocus, you must first kill that person." Mrs. Rand admits this, and Maxwell recalls that at no time was Jessica even near death-brushing aside Mrs. Rand's story as the result of an imaginative woman's belief in voodoo.

At the Home-front, the natives continue their voodoo ceremony with the intention of bringing Jessica back into their midst. A native squats and contorts his body in rhythm to the drumbeats--all the while pulling a cord fastened to a small voodoo doll made to resemble Jessica toward him. At Fort Holland, Jessica leaves her room in the tower to walk slowly toward the gate. Wes, determined that his former love should be free from spending the remainder of her life in an asylum, opens the gate for her, and then, plucking the arrow from the ship's figurehead, follows after her. He catches up to her and stabs her with the arrow. Suddenly, he spots the dark form of Carre Four looming up nearby, and he carries his beloved Jessica toward the seashore. Carre Four dutifully follows, arms outstretched, but powerless to prevent Wes from walking into the sea. As the waves swallow up the lovers, his arms fall to his sides.

A torchlight procession of mourning natives, followed by Carre Four, bring the two bodies back to Fort Holland in the early hours of the morning. As tragedy is brought to its conclusion, the voice of an elderly native delivers a sorrowful prayer:

Oh, Lord God most holy! Deliver them from the bitter pangs of eternal death. The women was a wicked woman and she was dead in her own life's sin, and dead in the selfishness of her heart. And she man followed her. Her steps led him down to evil; her feet to cold depths. Pity him, Oh Lord, pity them who are dead...and give peace and happiness to the living.

I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE cannot be regarded as Val Lewton's finest gothic achievement, although there may well be some readers who consider it to be the most atmospheric and, consequently, the best of the zombie films. It is certainly ironical that many of this country's leading film critics panned the producer's work in the same breath that they often condemned the less original horror films of their day. The New York Times pointed out the popularity of horror pictures at the time of the film's release and proceeded to denounce the work as "...a dull, disgusting exaggeration of an unhealthy, abnormal concept of life." It went on to suggest that if the days of the fear that it had a duty to protect the morals of moviegoers by censoring or protesting the use of such expressions as "hell" and "damn" in such purposeful dramas as WE ARE THE MARINES, then it seems that it was also that office's duty to safeguard the "youth of the land" from the sort of "stuff & nonsense" that their minds will absorb from viewing I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE.

Nowadays it has become far more fashionable to lavish an undue amount of praise on Lewton's films, therefore the pendulum seems to have finally swung back in the other direction, an even balance is sorely needed. I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE is, at times, an excellent film with a number of aspects of Lewton and Tourneur at their atmospheric best. But atmosphere alone cannot entirely sustain a film; in this case the picture is occasionally sluggish, a little too poetic and romantic, even a bit boring and dull. It lacks the much more intriguing character development evidenced in CAT PEOPLE; it lacks the cold, icy fear one gets with the presence of an unknown fiend who can strike at any time as in THE LEOPARD MAN; it is further devoid of exceptional performers such as Karloff and Henry Daniell (as seen together in THE BODY SNATCHER).

# I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE



Lewton always sought to instill an artistic subtlety within his films, and his greatest moments of horror usually depended on what the audience did not see. Through the use of sound effects and low-key photography, commonplace settings could become as menacing as a Carpathian castle. These were Lewton's triumphant moments, and those truly worthy of praise. Unfortunately, such moments were only highlights in the Lewton films, and seldom were reinforced by either theme or dialogue. His most disappointing pictures from the standpoint of strong effects are CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE and THE 7TH VICTIM. Both are commendable films in terms of romantic gothicism, but are exceedingly dull in other aspects for the most part. It simply boils down to what one's cup of tea is, and Lewton's brew was romanticism as well as suspenseful horror--just as Whale often allowed his penchant for humor and comedy to pervade his work in the genre.

By its title, one would expect I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE to be heavily dominated by supernatural elements. Quite the contrary is found within the film's context, however. All of the picture's highlights are pure Lewton-Tourneur. For example, it is easy for the audience to identify with the heroine's fright as she comes across Jessica in the dimly lit tower room. But, in typical Lewton style, the climax of the sequence denounces the presence of anything really harmful or supernatural. The greatest highlight of the film, the journey of Betay and her "white zombie" from Fort Holland to the Home-front, suggests the leaving of a point of safety to venture into dark realms. And it is the journey itself, and not what lies at its end, which is the most frightening. The scene builds continuously on each succeeding point--from the cane field to the tree in which the goat hangs, to the confrontation with Carre Four at the crossroads. None of these elements are supernatural in origin, yet Lewton makes us fear them. Perhaps the most amazing trick Lewton ever perpetrated on his audience came with the character of Carre Four. The figure is immediately identified as a zombie because of his physical resemblance to the typical zombie (awkward and slow, bug-eyed, etc.). Yet at no point in the entire film is he referred to as anything other than the guardian of the Home-front. It is the audience who "stamps" him as a monster. His appearance at the end of the film, bringing up the rear of the eerie procession, suggests that he is a curious individual, but hardly a supernatural creature. He more closely represents a living and ever-present "key misery"--a symbol of the black man's suffering on the isle.

Of course, the zombie denoted in the title is

Jessica Holland, who is first proclaimed such by Dr. Maxwell, though only in jest. Mrs. Rand's story of woodsmen is discounted by Maxwell when he recalls that Jessica never really died. What Lewton has neatly accomplished in *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* is giving us a zombie film without zombies! Yet, unlike the many titles which later unscrupulously applied the term to creatures which were not really zombies in the true sense, he convinces his audience that there are at least two zombies in the film. The "Lewton method" of ingenious plotting and atmospheric photography has cooled us once again.

Despite its highlights, *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* fails to impress one in areas *WHITE ZOMBIE* handled so competently—a rich, full-blooded dialogue and a complete dedication to the macabre theme. The Curt Siodmak-Ardel Wray screenplay stresses the romantic, the sorrowful and the odd lack of beauty that pervades the settings; but it becomes listless, without the necessary vitality to sustain interest. In this particular film, Lewton's flair for the romantic caused the elements of gothicism to suffer.

The acting, although in accord with the slow pace of the script, suffers from a lack of emotion. Francis Dee's character is "Jane Eyre" type of heroine—symbolizing determined innocence. James Hylton is admirably restrained as Wesley Rand and is, perhaps, the best actor in the film. Tom Conway seems to be playing his brother, George Sanders, by giving a staid, unemotional British-type performance as Paul Holland. James Bell and Edith Barrett do well with their barely noticeable roles, but it is with the miscast characters upon whom the best scenes rely. Christine Gordon and Derby Jones as "zombie"-types are physically perfect, and Sir Lancelot's macabre little verse is sheer delight.

In all, *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* contains some of the best and worst of Lewton. There is little doubt that the film is almost exactly what he wished it would be—a combination of elements. But one should remember that as a maker of horror films, Lewton's unique methods were not always entirely successful, and it seems that *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* will always dwell within the shadow of its more exciting and dynamic predecessor, *WHITE ZOMBIE*.

#### ZOMBIES ON BROADWAY

With the conclusion of the World War in 1945, Hollywood's second major horror cycle had nearly run its course both in terms of quantity and what little quality the era of the forties had been able to muster. Partly responsible for this noticeable decline in the gothic film was the American public's changing tastes. With the end of the war, tastes in escapist vehicles had begun to change considerably and in their place came a rise in the popularity of comedy films.

RKO, seeking to capitalize on what seemed to be a dying (yet still profitable) genre, released *ZOMBIES ON BROADWAY*, which combined witless fun with low-grade horror. Top-billed in the affair were comics Wally Brown and Alan Carter who can only be charitably described as a pre-Martin and Lewis team with none of the few endearing qualities which resulted in the success of the latter comedy duo. Sharing the billing (but not the screen time) was an already haggard-looking Bela Lugosi and, in minor supporting roles, were two Lewton leftovers: Derby Jones and Sir Lancelot, in roles identical to those they had played in *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE*.

The script, which was probably devised within a couple of hours (or so it seems), had Brown and Carter playing Jerry Miles and Mike Strager, a couple of press agents for supposedly reformed gangster Ace Miller (Sheldon Leonard), who is about to deliver a real address and, after a short sojourn to a local museum, the boys learn from Professor Hopkins (Ian Wolfe) that a one-time colleague of his, Richard Renault (Lugosi), sailed

to the Isle of San Sebastian many years previous to make a study of the phenomenon.

Miller forces the boys to sail to the island, and in no time they are greeted with the same tune sung to Frances Dee in *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE*, but with different lyrics. As the boys leave, the calypso singer warns: "Their chance to leave may come too late; and blood on the ground may mark their fate."

Unknown to the Americans, their arrival has been noted by Joseph (Joseph Vitale) who makes his way through the jungle to the castle home of his employer, Doctor Renault. Renault has succeeded in turning humans into zombies through scientific means, but his guinea pigs have always reverted back to themselves...or died...shortly after Renault injected them with his serum. Nevertheless, he continues to strive to create a being such as Kalaga (Derby Jones), a zombie created by voodoo which he took from the natives for his servant 20 years before.

Meanwhile, Jerry and Mike find a friend in singer Jean La Danse (Anne Jeffreys—later Marion Kirby in TV's *TOPPER*) who offers to take them a native ceremony where they may find their zombie. On the way, the calypso carries Jean off to Renault's castle and, after some unimpaired kisses with irate natives, the boys stumble onto its location. Mike is turned into a zombie by Renault and Kalaga kidnaps Jerry. But before the doctor can inject his most recently developed serum into Miles, Jean frees him and the three of them make their way from the castle. Renault orders Kalaga to kill them, but the zombie kills his master instead, throwing his body into a grave which Renault had dug for the others.

Jean and Jerry lead the zombieized Mike successfully aboard the ship bound for the States, and all goes well with their plans to display him as "The Zombie Hat" attraction up until the last minute, when Strager reverts to his normally silly self. Miller is about to personally shoot the boys when the lights go off during the scene. Outside the office, the capacity audience (including Walker and Professor Hopkins) continue to chant for the promised zombie. When the attraction does appear, it is none other than Ace Miller himself, the victim of Renault's stolen hypodermic needle which stabbed him in the fight. Hopkins and Walker are satisfied and the night is a total success until Jerry Miles sits down on the hypo and rises to become the latest bug-eyed monster!

*ZOMBIES ON BROADWAY* might have been a slightly better film if some care had been taken in developing a mood through the filming of the picture. Though poorly constructed, its script had potential which was never realized. Many of the same studio technicians who had worked (and still were working) with Lewton on his series of films were engaged on the picture. It is undoubtedly true that art directors Albert S. D'Agostino and Walter E. Kellner—the same men who had done such acceptable work on *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE*—had precisely the same budget allotted them. Many of the sets were the same, in fact. Executive producer Sid Regall apparently had no idea that the "Lewton touch" was uninspired and limp direction seem to be the basic causes of the film's failure. Lugosi's characterization of Dr. Renault is hardly more than a stereotype of the finely rendered mad doctors and fiends from his earlier classic films. In fact, he's even required to play straight man to the comic antics of a small monkey in one sequence. Derby Jones fared somewhat better, even though he lacked the photography and eerie atmosphere which heightened his character in the Lewton film. The final scene in which he kills Lugosi (which, incidentally, doesn't make sense) is perhaps the only acceptably macabre moment in the entire film.

*ZOMBIES ON BROADWAY* is an example of talent falling short of its potential, and looks a little better than *BEELZEBUB*, *THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY* (which is something of a remake in itself).

#### VALLEY OF THE ZOMBIES

In 1946 Republic Pictures released what was to become the last zombie title of the decade with their *VALLEY OF THE ZOMBIES*. Although the title is somewhat misleading—having more to do with vampirism than zombies—the low-budgeted quickie had a thoroughly engaging plot throughout its brief 58-minute running time.

Ormand Murks (Ian Keith), a pathologically disturbed scientist, has been committed to a mental institution by Doctor Rufus Maynard (Charles Trowbridge) because of his insane belief that blood transfusions can prolong his life. He seemingly dies on an operating table a short time later, but turns up very much alive in Maynard's office. He reveals to the physician that his one great life's ambition has been to prove that man could appear as though he were dead, yet live! Murks discovered that an intermediate stage between life and death did indeed exist—a world of living death! Murks tells the doctor that he learned the secret in a "land of voodoo rites and devil potents," in "the valley of the zombies!" However, once the mysterious serum is taken, the person must live within this intermediate stage for the remainder of his life and subsist on constant transfusions. After Murks tells the physician his secret, he is told by Maynard that he does not have the right blood type on hand. The revelation causes Murks to kill the doctor for his blood. Murks' younger brother, who is convinced that Murks has gone too far, also pays with his life.

Throughout the picture a great many clichés are present: protracted closeups on Murks' bulging eyes and seething countenance just before he strikes; the visit to the lonely graveyard by the hero and heroine; the black-caped Murks standing in the shadows; the kidnapping of the heroine; and, finally, Murks' death as he is shot and falls to his doom from atop a building. Actually, the screenplay is little more than a reworking of an earlier Warner Brothers film, *THE RETURN OF DR. X* (1939). The plus side is its darkly photographed settings, its musical score, and the surprisingly well-played performance by Ian Keith. Keith combined the melodramatic suave of Lugosi with the softly smiling and smilingly macabre voice of Karloff, and it is quite sad that he never had another opportunity to create a macabre role.

The film is neither a gem nor a bomb, but is enjoyable, even today.

#### ZOMBIES OF THE '50's

With the trend of the early and mid-fifties leaning toward science fiction rather than horror, it comes as little surprise that script writers began developing more stories in which aliens were reducing earthmen to mindless creatures, mad doctors were using science to create zombie-like creatures, *CREATURE WITH THE ATOM BRAIN* (1955), *PLAN NINE FROM OUTER SPACE* (1959), *THE EARTH DIES SCREAMING* (1964), *MONSTROSITY* (1964) and *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* (1969) are some examples of the fusing of science fiction with the supernatural.

Republic Pictures' chapter play, *ZOMBIES OF THE STRATOSPHERE* (1952), was an unoriginal action effort using much stock footage from previous serials. It was later released in a feature version as *SATAN'S SATELLITES* (1958), but neither title accurately described its mundane plot: an alien attempt to overthrow the earth. Paramount remake

*THE GHOST BREAKERS* under the title of *SCARED STIFF* with Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis in 1953, but the new version lacked both the Paramount lushness and attention to detail that distinguishes the first sound version. The picture was merely a half-hearted romp through the same wacky antics that Hope and Goddard had run back in 1940. This time the zombie was played by Jack Lambert and in no way could his performance be compared to Noble Johnson's. Only the most loyal fans of the comedy duo could look favorably on this one, and it is hardly one of their best.

Boris Karloff turned up in a very cheaply produced film (partially shot in Hawaii) called *VOODOO ISLAND*, which was released by United Artists in 1957. Karloff's role was that of Philip Knight, a professor who is skeptical in regard to the powers of supernatural and voodoo. He journeys to an obscure isle where he finds man-eating plants and voodoo-practicing natives who turn members of the party into shrunken dolls and mindless non-entities (they are never actually turned zombies to my recollection). While the film is usually considered one of Karloff's worst, his competent performance and the overall bizarre nature of some of the scenes (i.e. two young girls play around a plant which devours one of them) save it from total disaster.

The same sort of bizarre touches which saved *VOODOO ISLAND* more than rescued *ZOMBIES OF MORA TAU*, which was released on a double bill with *THE MAN WHO TURNED TO STONE* by Columbia that same year. Opening with the tinny, "canned" music familiar to all those who frequented theaters on Friday evenings and Saturday afternoons during the late '50's, *ZOMBIES OF MORA TAU* begins with a sequence vaguely reminiscent of *WHITE ZOMBIE*.

Young Jan Peters (Autumn Russell) returns to her Grandmother's home on Mora Tau off the African coast after an absence of ten years. She is met and driven to her Grandmother by the elderly lady's hired man Sam (Gene Roth), but on the way Jan is shocked when Sam hits a shabbily dressed man on the dark road and refuses to stop to attend to him!

"It wasn't a man, it was one of them!" the driver replies. If this line seems cliché, sacrifice it to say that it works well within the film. After her arrival at her Grandmother's home, Mrs. Peters (Marjorie Eaton) brushes the incident aside as a phenomena of the supernatural.

Off the coastline, a boat has arrived to dive for the huge fortune in diamonds believed to be at the bottom of the sea off the voodoo-haunted Mora Tau. Leading the expedition is George Harrison (Joel Ashley) who has come with his wife Moana (Allison Hayes), diver Jeff Clark (Gregg Palmer) and archeologist Jonathan Egbert (Morris Anau) along with a few crewmen. Before they are even underway, a figure slips on board ship and kills one of the crew. The group is coldly greeted by Mrs. Peters who reminds them that she had written warning them of the dangers they would face if they came for the gems. The



THE PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES



WAR OF THE ZOMBIES

old woman shows them the graves of the five previous treasure-seeking groups which failed to recover the jewels. Later, Egbert informs Mrs. Peters that he is well aware of the legends surrounding the sinking of the "Susan See" 50 years previous. She displays a photograph of her late husband, Captain Jeremy Peters, as he appeared 50 years ago. He is still the same today, "except for his eyes," she sadly notes. For when the "Susan See" put in for trade way back in 1894, the sailors discovered a cask full of uncut diamonds protected by the natives. Captain Peters and a number of the crew were killed in the struggle over the jewels, while the remainder of the men successfully returned to the ship with the fortune. But shortly afterwards, the undead Captain and his crew--now zombies--returned to their ship to kill those who had survived the battle and to scuttle the ship as well. Since then they have been doomed to walk the earth as undead beings, to guard the treasure from falling into the hands of the living one.

Events move swiftly along as one by one, the zombies begin to claim the lives of the latest expedition. Jeff forces Harrison to give him a bigger share of the loot for taking greater risks, and the tycoon reluctantly agrees. The first dive is unsuccessful, for the zombies are able to walk the ocean's depths and Jeff nearly loses his life when they damage his oxygen tank. Harrison is able to save Jeff, but the tensions and fears result in a falling out between Mona and her husband, and she flees out into the night. When she fails to return, the men organize a search party and discover her body on a slab in an old mausoleum in which the zombies repose in open coffins. Mrs. Peters warns them that Mona is now one of the undead, but Harrison refuses to leave his wife even though she stabs and kills a man.

Realizing that the zombies are repelled by fire, Jeff uses underwater flares to keep them away while he opens the ship's safe and extracts the jewels. When he surfaces, he makes for the island away from the creatures and tells both Jan and Mrs. Peters that he is taking them with him and that they should be able to elude the zombies. Mrs. Peters implores Jeff to allow her to throw the gems into the sea so that curse may be forever lifted from the dead men, allowing them to return to their graves. But Clark is determined to make a successful escape. Harrison is convinced that Jeff has betrayed him, but before he can do anything he is knifed by his undead wife. The diver and the two women reach the launch, but at the last moment Jeff relents and gives the diamonds to Mrs. Peters who scatters them over the side. When the last of the stones are gone, the zombies disappear forever, leaving only their shabby clothes as a memory of their terror.

From a summary of the plot, **ZOMBIES OF MORA TAU** may sound quite childish and ridiculous, but by taking itself seriously all the way through, it succeeds in rising above much of the muck which is characteristic of this time (i.e. the Bert Gordon trash, the "Teenage Monster" bombs). The clichés are there, but they are made palatable by competent writers and actors. Raymus (who wrote **THE MAN WHO TURNED TO STONE** and co-authored **EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS**, among others) fashioned a tightly drawn script from an original story by famed serial writer George W. Plympton. Only occasionally does the script go overboard, and perhaps one of the most humorous lines comes near the end of the picture when Jeff Clark is trying to convince Mrs. Peters that the zombies can be fooled. By distributing the jewels in every part of the world, how will the zombies be able to do anything? "What would they do? Picket all the jewelry stores on Fifth Avenue?" The line is delivered perfectly straight by Gregg Palmer, and the logic of what he says almost puts it over!

Resembling the zombies of **WHITE ZOMBIE**, the undead in the picture are all Caucasians and are at times quite frightening in their haggard, shuffling appearance. And the cast is uniformly adequate as well. Gregg Palmer and Autumn Russell make for good hero/heroine stereotypes, but the supporting cast consisting of Morris Ankrum, Allison Hayes, Majorin Eaton, Gene Roth, and Joel Ashley often rise above the material to bring credence to their roles.

The weaknesses of the film can be attributed mostly to the low budget. The pressbook praised



director Edward Cahn as an "efficiency expert" for rigging up actors Palmer and Ashley with bubble machines resembling oxygen tanks. Unfortunately, the effect is hardly convincing even on the mini-screen of a television set and the slow-moving actors in diving suits behind the water tank did little to aid these scenes. Cahn's film will have taken a look at Fox's 1932 film *QUARANTAIN THE MAGICIAN* in which co-director William Cameron Menzies and Art Director Max Parker devised a much more realistic fakery for their underwater scenes.

The horror film epidemic known as the "Teen-age Monster" craze which ravaged the movie end of the fifties caught up with the zombie in an incredibly inept film called *TEENAGE ZOMBIES*. Copyrighted in 1957 and released the following year (although some sources inaccurately place the film's release date as late as 1961), it was another brain-child of producer-director Jerry Warren, the same man responsible for such later trash as the American versions of the Mexican films *CURSE OF THE STONE HAND* and *THE FACE OF THE SCREAMING WEREWOLF* (LA CASA DEL TERROR). Starring Katherine Victor as a foreign scientist intent on making mindless slaves of most of the human race, she conducted her experiments on a lonely island off the California coast. The "zombies" arrive as a group of pre-AT "Beach Party" types who are quickly imprisoned by the femme scientist's stop-shouldered zombie-man (who is laughable at best). They eventually foil the woman and the foreign agents who have come to get her secret in the welcome climax. Most of the film was shot on the seclusive beach, in the back yard of one of the cast's or crew's home, and on a laboratory set which is perhaps the worst of all time--at the very least, it's a runner-up.

#### ZOMBIES OF THE '60'S

If Jerry Warren's *TEENAGE ZOMBIES* epitomized the worst of the fifties, then the early years of the next decade brought with them a flock of films which certainly equalled and even surpassed the inanities of that travesty. An obscure film called *THE DEAD ONE* surfaced unobtrusively in 1960, made by exploitation producer Harry Mahon for Mardi productions. Unfortunately, details on this New Orleans-based woodoo-chic film are presently unavailable, although a number of sources have revealed that zombies did appear.

The Mexican character Santo, a combination wrestler and masked super-hero who has managed to face almost every conceivable type of monster at one time or another in a series of wretched South-of-the-Border epics (which the film is not in sight even yet!) appeared in *SANTO CONTRA LOS ZOMBIES* (SANTO AGAINST THE ZOMBIES) in 1962. Whether or not the zombies were woodoo-created is another missing link of information at this time.

*INVASION OF THE ZOMBIES* was reputedly filmed in 1963 by Iselin-Tenney Productions, but however most researchers are in accord that the film was eventually retitled and distributed by 20th Century-Fox as *THE HORROR OF PARTY BEACH*. Of course, that film lacked any semblance of what might be considered a zombie, but a curious footnote on the subject stems from my own vague recollection of seeing the *INVASION OF THE ZOMBIES* title on a theater marquee while passing through Maryland in 1965: if *INVASION OF THE ZOMBIES* did play, it might well have been *THE HORROR OF PARTY BEACH* under an alternate title...or was there actually an independently made and released film of that name?

*THE INCREDIBLY STRANGE CREATURES WHO STOPPED LIVING AND BECAME MIXED-UP ZOMBIES* (formerly *THE INCREDIBLY STRANGE CREATURE WHO STOPPED LIVING AND BECAME A CRAZY MIXED-UP ZOMBIE*) speaks for itself insofar as it is probably the worst of the zombie films. It is an amateurishly written, directed and acted pre-amp effort of Ray Dennis Steckler and George J. Morgan who were later responsible for both *THE KILLER* and *SAY FUNK AND BOO BOO* (a definite parody inspired by the success of television's *BATMAN*). The setting is a carnival in which an ugly fortune teller named Madame Estrella (Doret O'Hara) derives amoral pleasure from pouring acid on the faces of her reluctant lovers, after which they are imprisoned in a cage. They eventually es-

cape and, since the acid has destroyed their minds as well, go on a killing rampage which ends with their own destruction.

The film fails in both its meager attempts at laughs and horror, and the color photography by Joseph V. Mascelli is too good for such a pitifully conceived shocker.

American International handled the stateside distribution of an Italian Galatea Production Roma Contro Roma, whose English title became *WAR OF THE ZOMBIES*. John Drew Barrymore, son of the famed thespian (and who also appeared in another cheaply made semi-horror film called *THE NIGHT THEY KILLED RASPUTIN*) played Aderbal, an Armenian priest who serves a powerful and evil god. The insane priest's lust for power causes him to lead an uprising against the Roman Empire and he is initially successful in destroying large numbers of Roman soldiers through his magical prowess. When the Senate in Rome dispatches Centurion Gaius (Ettore Manni) to quell the rebellion, Aderbal manages to capture the officer and restores an army of dead men to do battle with the Roman legion. When Gaius escapes and the sorcerer destroyed, the undead perish as well and order is restored to Armenia. But the film itself can scarcely be rated above the level of the standard Italian macabre-gladiator hokum.

Emerson Pictures supposedly contained zombies, although the term was again loosely applied. The title was *MONSTROSITY*, which is a good description of the film as well. Frank Gerstle played a doctor whose brain experiments have failed causing nothing but demented beings which *Variety* and other sources termed "zombies." It was released to TV under the title of *THE ATOMIC BRAIN* and strangely enough, was directed by the cameraman of *THE INCREDIBLY STRANGE CREATURES*, Joseph Mascelli, who proved to be a better cameraman than director. The only zombies in either film were the actors themselves.

#### A TELEVISION ZOMBIE

Although it is usually agreed upon by most that television has seldom risen to great heights in the area of fantasy horror, one outstanding contradiction to that belief lies in NBC's *THRILLER* series hosted by Boris Karloff during the first years of the '60's and still to be seen in syndication in certain parts of the country. One of the adaptations during the show's second season was based on Robert E. Howard's classic short story "Pigeons From Hell" which originally appeared in *Weird Tales* magazine in the late 1930's. The video adaptation was so chillingly conceived and filmed; so faithful to the original work, that I felt obligated to include it within this discussion although it may not be a zombie tale in the strictest sense.

Howard's monsterish creation had its basis not only in the zombie, but in the witch, the vampire and the werewolf as well. His inhuman fiend was called a "Zuwebster," and the author defined the creature as something "...no longer human. It knows neither relatives nor friends. It is one with the people of the Black World. It commands the natural demons--owls, bats, snakes and werewolves, and can fetch darkness to blot out a little light. It can be slain by lead or steel, but unless it is slain thus, it lives forever, and it eats no such food as humans eat. It dwells like a bat in a cave or on a cliff, its presence is naught to the zuwebster; an hour, a day, a year, all is one. It cannot speak human words, nor think as a human thinks, but it can hypnotize the living by the sound of its voice, and when it slays a man, it can control the lifeless body until the flesh is cold. As long as the blood flows, the corpse is its slave. Its pleasure lies in the slaughter of human beings."

In the television episode, two young brothers named Tim and Johnny (Brandon DeWilde and David Walton) are driving through the swamps of Louisiana on a vacation through the southern states when their car goes out of control and lands in a ditch. Investigating, the boys notice an unusually large flock of pigeons cooing nearby... a flock which flies up to attack Johnny's face as if they meant to kill him. Nevertheless, due to the lateness of the hour, the two young men decide to remain the night in the old plantation house whose dark shape is silhouetted against the

sky. After bidding down on the dust-covered floor inside, the boys soon fall asleep. But their peaceful slumber is interrupted by a weird and unearthly wailing which arouses Johnny from his sleep. Rising as though in a hypnotic trance, the young man starts out into the garden and finds the ghastly figures of the mansion. A short time later his horrible screams awaken his brother who hastens to the foot of the stairs. His eyes spot a dim shape coming slowly down the steps... a shape which he recognizes as that of his mother. He calls out, "Mother!" and the living corpse coming towards him, its head split open, and carrying a bloody axe. The corpse pursues him, trying to smash open his head as well, but the younger brother manages to escape from the cursed house to fall unconscious on the ground outside.

Tim comes to in the arms of a stranger who introduces himself as Sheriff Buckner (Crane Benton). The frightened boy quickly relates his story, including his encounter with the pigeons, when Buckner stops him to say that although he has lived in the mansion all his life, he has never once seen a single pigeon. Going back to the room where the two men discover Johnny's body, the axe in his dead hand firmly implanted in Tim's bedding. Taking the body out to Buckner's car, the two re-enter the mansion to explore the second floor by flashlight. But as they slowly walk down the hallway, a dark shadow looms in the distance. As the light goes out completely, quickly retracing their steps, they're surprised to discover the light working again after they have retreated from the hallway. Downstairs once again, the Sheriff relates the history of the old plantation; that it was once the home of a cruel and unscrupulous slave master who inhabited the mansion were three sisters, the last of the servants had left—all but old Jacob Blount—because of their mistreatment. Finally, only one of the sisters remained, Elizabeth Blassenerville, who it was rumored eventually left to be married to a man from San Francisco. Since then the house has been deserted. Searching the room, the two men come upon a rotting diary which reveals the mounting fears of Elizabeth Blassenerville, and of her suspicions that she was not alone; that something monstrous lurked within the walls and under the floor. Evidence points to a former servant girl named Elsie, who it was thought had fled with the other servants.

Buckner and Tim leave the accursed house to walk through the forest to the small wooden hut of old Jacob Blount to see if he knows the secret of the plantation. Although he fears death for revealing his knowledge, the elderly Negro tells Buckner that he was the one who told Bulaeus he had come to his hut one night to become the drink which would cause her to become the ghoul-like creature. As Jacob narrates his story, the cooing of pigeons suddenly stops him. He refuses to go any further for fear of his very life when, while picking up a stick of firewood, a small coral snake strikes out at him. He falls dead, half from the shock of the incident.

Returning to the Blasseville Plantation, Buckner is startled to find pigeons, hundreds of them, perching on his car and about the area. Going inside, the Sheriff bids Tim to settle down and get some rest while he investigates. A short time later, Tim awakens from a nightmare recounting the horrible events of a few hours before, when he notices the Sheriff is absent. Climbing the staircase to search for him, his fear of a madman and a house him to return downstairs but, as he reaches the last step, the same wailing which beckoned his brother to his death exerts its powerful influence, drawing Tim helplessly back upstairs. As Tim walks hypnotically down the hallway on the second floor, and ancient hag in tattered clothes comes to him, and the young men, a cleaver upraised in her bony hand, the Sheriff strikes. Sheriff Buckner's gun rings out from the shadows, the old woman screams horribly, and Buckner continues to pour shot after shot into the darkness into which the hideous creature disappears. Snapping Tim out of his trance, Buckner leads the way down the corridor, his flashlight unaffected by any supernatural powers now. Discovering a slit in the wall, he tells Tim to slip in to find themselves in a tiny room in which the old woman's body reposed on a couch...dead. Chained on another wall hangs the skeletons of the Blasseville sisters, their heads split open, and perhaps now the souls of

the dead Blassenville's, present all these years in the pigeons which perch about the plantation, might at last be confined to their deserved places in Hell.

"Pigeons from Hell" was directed by John Newland, who is immediately recalled as the host of ONE STEP BEYOND. Newland acted in and directed other shows in the series, notably the "Return of Andrew Bentley" which also often reached pinnacles of superb horror. His obvious knowledge of handling the development of atmosphere and suspense is evident throughout "Pigeons From Hell", which moves at a nerve-wracking pace from beginning to end. The subtle beginning, set in the swamps of Louisiana, is the work of the best Universal films and of Howard's story itself. The characterizations are completely believable, and Otello Naismith's climactic appearance



THE INCREDIBLY STRANGE CREATURES WHO STOPPED LIVING AND BECAME MIXED-UP ZOMBIES

As the zumbiism is as visually startling as Tony Perkins' entrance in his "Mother" at the conclusion of PSYCHO. In all, the episode added up to be perhaps the best of the series, and can be favorably compared to almost any of the best theatrical excursions into the macabre in the zombie genre, it ranks second only to WHITE ZOMBIE, in this writer's opinion.

ZOMBIES FROM HAMMER

When Hammer Films Ltd. began their resurrection of the original Universal horrors with their own "formula-filmed" versions starting with THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and HORROR OF DRACULA, the follow-ups and sequels to those initial successes came with such rapidity that by 1962 and the release of THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, Hammer had pretty well exhausted the field of universally recognized "classic" monsters....literary, legendary or otherwise.

However, it was not until 1965 that the British filmmakers began to explore the possibilities of a voodoo theme in their films, with their production of *THE PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES*. Although originally cast out as a supporting picture for Hammer's long-awaited (but disappointing) vampire sequel, *DRACULA-PRINCE OF DARKNESS* in 1966, its well-mounted production values and adequate casting and script raises it above Hammer's lesser contributions.

The locale is a small Cornish village where the usual series of inexplicable deaths resulting from a strange malady continues to claim the lives of the villagers. The town's physician, Peter Thompson (Brook Williams), summons the aid of his old university professor, Sir James Forbes (Andre Morell), who soon arrives from London with his daughter Sylvia (Diane Clare). They are greeted by a pale and lethargic Alice Thompson (Jacqueline Pierce), Peter's wife, who seems to have been stricken with the disease herself. That night Sylvia notices that Alice has left the house and follows her, losing her in the woods. A group of young hoodlums in the employ of the town's squire, Clive Hamilton (John Carson), savagely abduct the girl and carry her off to their master's manor house to see who will possess her. Sylvia is spared by the timely arrival of Hamilton who angrily orders his servants away and offers to send the distraught girl back to the village in his carriage. But Sylvia refuses and begins her lonely trek back to the Thompson house on foot. Passing by the ruins of an abandoned tin mine, she is startled by a noise and, looking up, spies a ghastly corpse-like figure holding Alice Thompson in its arms. With mocking laughter, the creature burles the girl's dead body at Sylvia's feet. Meanwhile, Thompson and Sir James slowly begin an investigation of the deaths and eventually come to believe in the forces of evil. After Sylvia has recovered from her nocturnal ordeal, Squire Hamilton calls on the young lady and by a clever ruse manages to obtain some of her blood. After Alice is laid to rest, Thompson and Sir James return at sunset to find a number of white-robed, masked individuals attempting to disinter the grave. The figures disappear into the darkness, but the two physicians are shocked when Alice, now a zombie, rises from her coffin. Sir James beheads the monster with a spade, and his suspicions eventually lead him to steal into Hamilton's study where he finds a number of voodoo dolls, covered with blood, kept in small coffin-shaped boxes. He throws the symbols of black magic into the fireplace, but in doing so inadvertently sets fire to the house itself. He manages to escape in time to learn that Sylvia has been summoned through the forces of voodoo, presided over by High Priest Hamilton, to the bottom of the tin mine which Hamilton has had the zombies secretly working. Thompson and Sir James hasten through the mine to save Sylvia before she becomes a sacrificial victim. As the voodoo dolls begin to disintegrate in the flames at Hamilton's manor house, their physical shells likewise begin to smoulder. Sir James, Thompson and Sylvia manage to escape from the fiery holocaust in the mine lift just as the burning corpses turn on Hamilton and his men, putting an end to the consuming evil forever.

The screenplay for *THE PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES* was written by Peter Bryan (who had earlier done the adaptation for Hammer's *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* and a portion of *THE BRIDES OF DRACULA* script) and it can simply be described as a patient-plotted piece of hokum, lacking any real depth, but carrying enough care in its development that it is not tedious. It's a cliché-ridden piece of work which purports a degree of authenticity toward its subject matter and always treats it completely serious. The zombies are created through a voodoo ceremony presided over by a high priest and, after the blood of the intended victim has been obtained, the fluid is poured over one of the small wooden dolls. The victim begins to become sluggish in life until he eventually dies to be reborn as a zombie, his soul encased in the doll. One might note the similarity in comparison to vampirism, in that the victim slowly wastes away to become something less than human in semi-death. In spite of the somewhat intelligent handling the voodoo element receives in this film, the zombies themselves are not so fortunate. Their makeup, consisting of a greenish hue and a rotting

complexion, is horrendously overdone. Roy Ashton, who is one of the few talented makeup men in his profession today, has for once done a bit overboard and the effect cheapens the picture. Furthermore, the zombies are without individuality, a touch which greatly helped the success of *WHITE ZOMBIE*. In any case, the zombies appear in the usual "stock" scenes: carrying maidens (I must admit that the most frightening scene in the film comes with the medium shot of the zombie holding Alice atop the tin mine, followed by a close-up of the figure) lumbering about looking horrible and, finally, descending on their masters. I suspect that one sequence was added almost as an afterthought, this being a dream which Thompson has after he faints at the sight of his wife's decapitation. Thompson imagines that he has awakened alone in the same cemetery whose graves have become alive with rising zombies. Some of the shots of hands emerging from the dirt are effective, but director John Gilling over-builds the scene, cancelling out its success.

As in a great many Hammer films, past and present, there are some interesting and subtle comments on the nature of evil beneath the obvious storylines. I doubt that Peter Bryan is another pseudonym for Anthony Hinds (who usually writes under the name John Elder), but many of Elder's favorite developments are present in Bryan's script. For example, Bryan supports the theory that human corruptness is directly linked with supernatural evil; that the pursuit of wealth may lead to the disintegration of a man's soul. John Carson's stylized portrayal of Clive Hamilton is another in Hammer's long line of heavies in the Lee-Cushing-William tradition; villains who are arrogantly handsome, nobles by birth who have, in the pursuit of insane dreams or pacts with the Devil, become human or inhuman monsters. Their creations are only extensions of their evil and the fitting justice which men such as these usually meet is in having their monsters destroy them--evil destroying evil--and the both of them consumed in some natural holocaust, the most common being fire.

Another untraditional subtlety displayed in the film is its use of white (as opposed to black) robes and accompanying devil masks in costuming the voodoo cult members. White has often suggested both virginity and sensuality, and its use here has an effect not unlike *THE KISS OF THE VAMPIRE*, heightening the sacrificial scenes.

John Gilling seemingly could not inspire his cast to give anything more than standard performances. Although John Carson displays a greater degree of consummate evil than did vampire Noel Willman in *THE KISS OF THE VAMPIRE*, unfortunately, Bryan's script does not allow for a development in



PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES

the character of Aquire Hamilton sufficiently to make him any more than one of Hammer's minor villains, and Carven has since displayed his talents in a much better role (as another corrupt, but sympathetic heavy) in *TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA*. And, of course, a major weakness in the script is the question as to why Hamilton would want to turn either Jacqueline Pierce or Diane Clare into female zombies? Pure sadism, perhaps?

Technical aspects throughout the film are well done, from James Bernard's shrill blending of voodoo drum beats with a series of lesser, almost stock motifs, to Bernard Robinson's remarkably fine settings (the atmospheric tin mine is one of his greatest conceptions), and although the film may once have been regarded as a "minor" Hammer, it stands out above much of what the studio is currently releasing.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is unfortunate but sadly true that the "zombie" as a creature of horror has never realized its full potential on the silver screen. It has seldom been depicted as anything more than a lumbering, heavily-madeup poor man's Frankenstein Monster. I suspect that the character will never again rise to the classic proportions it reached only once—in the Lugosi film—and fantasy film producers are so commercially minded at this time that an artistic film similar in content to Lewton's contribution seems even more impossible a dream.

"Zombie" films have never made up a large niche of the fantastic cinema, and the field remains virtually untapped of the many exciting possibilities which films like *WHITE ZOMBIE*, *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE*, and even *"Ghosts From Hell"* have partially evidenced over the last forty years.

#### END

### Cousin to a Classic

BY GARY P. COLLINS

*REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES*, a poverty row release of 1934, must certainly rank as one of the most interesting, and surprising, movies of any period. Its value, however, lies not in its own merit, which is practically nonexistent, but rather in its relationship to *WHITE ZOMBIE*, the Lugosi classic of 1932. In attempting to reproduce the success they had four years earlier, the Halperin brothers transposed, with very slight alterations, some of the plot elements and characters of *WHITE ZOMBIE*. The result, surprisingly enough, was a film as uninspired as its predecessor had been brilliant.

The first similarity between the two films is the remoteness of their settings. An appropriately mysterious foreign locale seems to be one of the basic requirements for the realization of a successful horror film. The atmosphere of foreboding generated by these backgrounds has contributed immeasurably to the success of the most notable films of the genre. The importance of the background illustrates one of the fundamental strengths of *WHITE ZOMBIE*, and weaknesses of *REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES*. The former, set in Haiti, is a prime example of the integral nature of the background in creating the film's overall effect. As the story unfolds, Haiti emerges as a dark, indefinable land inhabited by powerful sorcerers, utilizing the dreaded voodoo in their exploitation of superstitious natives. Almost all of the scenes are staged at night, enticing the viewer into a fearful realm composed of mists, shadows and darkness. This background obscurity infuses the film with an indecipherable, spiritual quality, suspending it in a timeless domain.

Southeast Asia, in the thirties anyway, could certainly be considered as inscrutable as Haiti. Consequently, *REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES* is located in Cambodia, and the ancient city of Angkor. It is difficult only not to be overcautious to suspect such a setting to be capable of creating an atmosphere as successful as *WHITE ZOMBIE*'s had been. That the result was a disaster is directly attributable to the prodigious amount of back projection present in the film. Many scenes are marred by the presence of a painfully obvious process screen. Scampering omnipresent, it fills the screen as native bearers parade by, two of the leading

protagonists act out a lengthy dialogue scene and, indeed, it becomes as inescapable as to be consistently viewed through the open flaps of a tent! This invests the film with an extreme two-dimensional appearance causing, in the worst of ways, to become which gradually produces a claustrophobic apprehension of being trapped in a box, one side of which must inevitably be a process screen!

The remoteness of the locale in both stories is but the first of the many similarities reflecting the kinship of the two films. In respect to plot elements and characters, the two variations become decidedly more pronounced. *WHITE ZOMBIE* had presented a wealthy plantation owner (Robert Frazer) enlisting the aid of a necromancer (Bela Lugosi) in an attempt to win the love of a newlywed (Madge Bellamy) from her husband (John Harron). Only the intervention and guidance of a missionary (Joseph Cawthorn) made possible the thwarting of the wizard and the ultimate reunion of the couple.

From such a deceptively simple plot, there emerged a skillfully executed adult fairy tale. Although a "B" film in all departments, *WHITE ZOMBIE* possessed some very strong points, not the least of which was Garnett Weston's screenplay, providing some sense of his own personal involvement and dialogue. Particularly effective was the evocative sequence wherein Frazer, seeking the sorcerer's assistance, journeys to the atmospheric sugar mill in the woods. Escorting past zombies who are grinding sugar cane for Lugosi's profit, Frazer is led to the back room where the necromancer gleefully informs him, "I have been on a journey to the bottom of my mill." Having previously acquired a scarf belonging to Miss Bellamy, Lugosi sardonically draws it from his coat, savoring Frazer's romantic torment. A later scene has the two of them preparing to exhume the body of the young bride. Frazer seemingly questions the propriety of their being accompanied on the mission by Lugosi's two bodyguards whereupon Lugosi launches into a glowing description of each of the six, concluding with, "And this, this is Chauvin, the High Executioner, who almost executed me! I took them just as we will take this one." "But what if they regain their souls?" Frazer questions fearfully. "They would tear me to pieces," Lugosi replies, "but that, my friend, shall never be."

*REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES*, unfortunately, possesses none of this grandeur which had characterized *WHITE ZOMBIE*. The plot emerges as a confused mélange because of the attempts to integrate all of the successful elements from the earlier film, while adding some new ideas to give the later film a surface originality.

The story concerns the journey of a somewhat ambiguous scientific expedition to the lost city of Angkor. One of the younger members (Dead Jagger) is romantically inclined towards the daughter (Dorothy Stone) of a senior scientist. The young lady, unfortunately, prefers the attention of another, which leads to the inevitably disastrous results. The rejected suitor forces the girl into a marriage after he discovers an ancient process which enables him to make zombies of his rival (Robert Noland), the girl's father (George Cleveland), and a troop of Cambodian soldiers who seemingly materialize from nowhere. Especially for the occasion, an elderly scientist (Carl Stouckie), who had previously befriended the young man and is now confined to a wheelchair as a result of an accident on the expedition, seems to be the only individual spared subjection to the young scientist's will. The older man eventually convinces Jagger of the futility of his desires, whereupon the zombie master releases all those under his spell. As might be expected, the troop of soldiers, led by Jagger's servant (Teru Shinada) who had been the first victim of the process, storm the house in appropriately riotous fashion and shoot the young scientist.

Quite obviously, every one of the characters in this story is the counterpart of a character in *WHITE ZOMBIE*. Some are single representatives, while others emerge as composites. The Jagger character, for example, combines elements of the Lugosi, Frazer, and Harron characters from the earlier film. In addition, the plot elements of unrequited love, and the power gained through zombies, are representative of both films.

The most astounding similarity presents itself, however, when Roy D'Arcy appears, portraying a rather mysterious character who, like Jagger, is seeking

the secret of the zombie "process." D'Arcy is made-up to appear as identical to Lugosi as is possible, to the point of wearing the same type of goatee and being garbed entirely in black. Compounding the physical appearance is one scene, which is a direct transposition of the previously mentioned sugar mill scene from WHITE ZOMBIE. In REVOLT, one of the focal points in the quest for the secret of the process is a ceremonial cloth covered with drawings. D'Arcy murders a cultist to obtain the cloth and, later, flaunts his possession of it before Jagger. In a scene which would lead to the impression that the two protagonists had certainly set through a few screenings of WHITE ZOMBIE, D'Arcy draws the cloth from his coat in a direct imitation of the scene where Lugosi tempts Fraser with the scarf!

Of passing interest, also, is the manner in which the zombies are "created" in the two films. In WHITE ZOMBIE, the process is decidedly simple, as Lugosi repeatedly informs Fraser. All that is required is the administration of a certain drug. "In a glass of wine, or perhaps a flower." Certainly easy enough! Such simplicity, however, did not impress the writers of REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES. In the case of Jagger's first victim, at least, it was necessary to burn a certain mysterious substance, while wafting the fumes in the direction of the victim. A rather haphazard process, to say the least, since the zombie master would certainly have been arrested in his tracks had an inopportune wind arisen, or one of his proposed victims arrived with a fan in hand!

Other shortcomings include the rambling screenplay, if indeed any of the dialogue had actually been committed to paper. So inconsequential are most of the mutterings throughout the film that one fan was moved to remark that the dialogue, by all appearances, must have been made up as the scenes unfolded. Here again, however, the writers were not above borrowing from the strength of the earlier screenplay by Weston. One sequence features scenes of the zombie soldiers wandering around rather aimlessly, as Jagger delivers a soundtrack narration. Expounding on his ideas of the control he wields over all of his victims, he concludes with, "No doubt you would tear me limb from limb should I relinquish my hold, but that, my friends, shall never be."

Lugosi's eyes, effectively superimposed at strategic intervals in WHITE ZOMBIE, also turn up in the '36 film. The important difference, however, is that they become rather ineffective through incessant reappearances. Indeed, had those eyes received much more footage, it would almost be necessary to include REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES in a Lugosi filmography!

The shortcomings of REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES, as compared with the brilliance of WHITE ZOMBIE, become even more interesting with the realization that both films had the same producer (Edward Halperin), director (Victor Halperin), photographer (Arthur Martinelli) and musician (Abbe Meyer). In spite of this, however, the sad fact remains that the '36 film does not possess any of the important characteristics which had so distinguished its predecessor.

The cast simply does not match up to that of WHITE ZOMBIE. Though Jagger and others, such as George Cleveland and Carl Stockdale, are certainly capable enough actors, it would be folly to expect anyone but Lugosi to be able to carry off the type of role he had essayed for Halperin in 1934.

In addition, a screenplay only one half as effective as that of WHITE ZOMBIE could have made a great deal of difference. Perhaps we should not be harsh judges, however, since it would be expecting a great deal of someone to have then produce a film to match the uniqueness of WHITE ZOMBIE. Despite the ineptitudes (perhaps, indeed, because of them), a major effort entitled REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES certainly deserves a niche as one of the more interesting footnotes in the history of the horror film.

END

(continued from page 16)

a story by Charles S. Belden; Adapted from the screenplay from MYSTERY OF THE NAZK MUSEUM by Don Mullahey & Carl Erickson; Directors of Photography: Bert Glennon & J. Peverell Marley, A.S.C.; Art Director: Stanley Fleischer; Edited by Rudi Fehr, A.C.E.; Sound by Charles Lang; Set Decorator: Lyle B. Reifneider; Music Composed & Conducted by David Buttolph; Orchestrations by Maurice de Pach; Natural Vision Supervision by M. L. Gunzburg; Visual Consultant: Julian Gunzburg, M.D.; Wardrobe by Howard Shoup; Makeup by Gordon Bau; Assistant Makeup Artists: Ken Westmore; Assistant Director: Jimmy McMahon.

Cast: Vincent Price (Prof. Henry Jarrod), Frank Lovejoy (Lieutenant Tabor), Phyllis Kirk (Susie Allen), Paul Picrel (Scott Andrews), Carolyn Jones (Cathy Grant), Roy Roberts (Matthew Burke), Angela Clarke (Mrs. Andrews), Paul Cavanagh (Sidney Willace), Dabbs Greer (Sergeant Jim Shane), Charles Buchinsky (Igor), Reggie Ryman (Barker), Philip Tonge (Bruce Allison), Ned Young (Leon Averill), Frank Ferguson (Morgue Official), Rita Moyle (Ma Flanagan), Ruth Warren (Scrubwoman), Richard Benjamin (First Detective), Jack Mower (Second Detective), Gorman Rhodes (Sargeant), Oliver Blake (Pompous Man), Leo Curley (Portly Man), Mary Lou Holloway (Mallie), Merry Townsend (Ticket Taker), Lyle Latell (Walter).

#### CHAMBER OF HORRORS

1966  
Walter Broderick. 100 minutes. In Technicolor; Originally intended as a pilot for a television series; Produced & Directed by Hy Averback; Associate Producer: Jim Barnett; Screenplay by Stephen Kandel; Story by Ray Russell & Stephen Kandel; Inspired by HOUSE OF WAX; Director of Photography: Richard Kline; Art Director: Art Loel; Music Composed & Conducted by William Lava; Unit Manager: Sherry Shourd; Assistant Director: Sam Schneider; Set Decorations by William L. Kuehl; Edited by David Nages; Makeup by Gordon Bau; Sound by M. A. Merrick; Hairdresser: Jean Burt Reilly.

Cast: Patrick O'Neill (Jason Cravette), "The Baltimore Strangler", Cesare Danova (Anthony Draco), Wilfred Hyde-White (Harold Blount), Laura Devon (Marie Chaplain), Patricia Wynne (Vivian), Suzi Parker (Barbara Dixon), Tim Dun (Ferguson), Reyes, Philip Bourmont (Inspector Matthew Strudwick), Jeanette Nolan (Mrs. Ewing Perryman), Marie Windsor (Madame Corona), Wayne Rogers (Police Sergeant Albertson), Vinton Hayworth (Judge Walter Randolph), Richard O'Brien (Doctor Romulus Cobb), Inger Stratton (Gloria), Berry Kroeger (Chun Sing), Charles Seal (Doctor Hopewell), Aylene Gibbons (Victoria, the bar maid), Tony Curtis (cameo role as a gentleman gambler).

END

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# LON CHANEY on LON CHANEY



## AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY GARY DORST

PHOTON: Do you object to being typed as a "horror film star" or don't you believe that you are typed as such?

MR. CHANEY: I've had the very good fortune throughout my life of not being "typed" as anything, except for given periods of time. As you, and all of your readers should know, motion pictures go in cycles. The intelligent actor follows the cycles - and exists, or succeeds.

PHOTON: Which do you consider to be your best horror film and why?

MR. CHANEY: Of course I believe that THE WOLF MAN is the best of my horror film - because he is mine!

PHOTON: Because your father was a famous make-up artist/film star, it is understandable that some of his talent rubbed off on you. Did you ever consider making a career as a make-up artist?

MR. CHANEY: Yes, my father was a famous make-up artist. But times have changed - and justly so. "Unicorns" is now involved; it is therefore impossible to be both an artist and a make-up man - and it's more fun to be an actor.

PHOTON: During your father's film career did the opportunity ever arise when you could have appeared in a film with him?

MR. CHANEY: Yes, during my father's career (when I was much younger) they used my hand in a film with him, rather than the hand of Alan Hale, Sr., whose hand was much too large. You can check this out further when my book, A Century of Chaney's, is released.

PHOTON: Did you ever watch your father perform in any of his famous horror films? If so, are there any instances of interest you could relate to the readers concerning his "behind-the-scenes" activities?

MR. CHANEY: In the early days of motion pictures, it was not considered a good thing for a star even to be married, much less have a son of my age. Therefore, I saw very few of his performances, except in the preparation for same. Check the book for further details.

PHOTON: What are your opinions of today's film industry?

MR. CHANEY: I hereby make use of the Fifth Amendment. I refuse to answer on the grounds that it might incriminate me - or someone else.

PHOTON: Is there anything that you miss in today's films that you really enjoyed during the '30's and '40's?

MR. CHANEY: Glamour.

PHOTON: In the interview you carried on with Johnny Carson's "Tonight Show", you mentioned that you went under five different names during your early film career (depending upon the billing

status you had). Can you recall any of these names besides your own name and your birth-given name?

MR. CHANEY: I used many names for many parts - hardly ever the same one twice - therefore this question is unanswerable.

PHOTON: Could you give the readers an idea of just what type of material will be included in your forthcoming book, A Century of Chaney's?

MR. CHANEY: The book is a pictorial anthology of the combined careers of my father, my mother and myself, totalling over a hundred years in the field of entertainment. It is not biographical, nor autobiographical. Short captions and short anecdotes relating to the individual pictures are included. That's about all of the written material.

PHOTON: Are there any new films in progress or any that will soon be released that you can mention to the readers?

MR. CHANEY: In 1966 I made an educational film in Brackettville, Texas, called A STRANGER IN TOWN. It was made for the University of Texas, and we used a lot of kids. I really had a ball with those kids. This has been shown on television.

PHOTON: Do any of your sons plan to make their careers in the motion picture industry? Do you favor this or not?

MR. CHANEY: I feel that it is only right and just that a son (or sons) should have the opportunity of carving his own niche in the world, no matter what that niche may be. My sons have not followed the ancient custom of entertainment as their chosen field, but both are quite successful in their own.

PHOTON: It is understandable and true that you consider your finest performance that of "Lennie" in OF MICE AND MEN. Would you tell us how you got this part, and what reasons you have for feeling that this was such a successful film for you?

MR. CHANEY: Because OF MICE AND MEN happens to be my own "pet", I reserve the right of secrecy as regards the motivation and outcome of this character ("Lennie").

PHOTON: Were you ever considered for or offered the same role in the more recent television adaption of the novel OF MICE AND MEN? If you saw it, did the television adaption come off well to you?

MR. CHANEY: No, I was not offered the television job of "Lennie" in OF MICE AND MEN. I did see it, and I again call on the Fifth Amendment.

PHOTON: Which horror role was the most uncomfortable for you? This pertains to the make-up you had to wear.

MR. CHANEY: Somebody of your age ought to know better. THE WOLF MAN, of course!

(continued from page 2)

was one of the first of the big shockers.

**PHOTON:** It is tragic that so many old and wonderful films like this have been lost, some of them forever.

**MISS FARRELL:** Yes, a lot of them. Many of the pictures I did. All the old "Torchy Blane" series. They just let go and destroyed them. It was never dreamed that they could be sold to television. So they've just lost the film on most of them. But I think that what happens is that the films are played so often that they become weak. For television, they have to be stronger because it's photographing a photographed image. So I think, possibly, that the old timers were out, and they didn't bother to reprint them when they had already filmed a remake (**MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM** was remade as **HOUSE OF WAX** by Warner Brothers in 1953).

**PHOTON:** As a director, how was Michael Curtis?

**MISS FARRELL:** He was very exacting. I liked him very much; we got along fine. But he worked people to death. We all collapsed one night on **WAX MUSEUM**. We worked us for 23 hours! We all had

hysterics and collapsed! They had to let us have the next day off to stay in bed! We didn't have union rules then, and they could work you on a Saturday as late as they wanted. And we worked every day! up at 5 o'clock in the morning, and we didn't get home sometimes 'til 10 or 11 at night. Then up again and back at the studio by a quarter of six. So now the unions have changed all the rules. They don't work Saturdays. They have to give you time off. They cannot bring you back under twelve hours.

**PHOTON:** Was an actual mask constructed over Mr. Atwill's "scarred" face?

**MISS FARRELL:** It wasn't wax. Oh, yes, it must have been when they cracked it. He was possibly using his own face, except when they'd use the scarred face. And when they did the crack up, they'd use a mask of his own face and put that over the scarred face.

**PHOTON:** Have you any last comments you'd care to make?

**MISS FARRELL:** No, just that Mr. Curtis made a most exciting film that made a lot of money for Warner Bros.

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**PHOTON:** It was mentioned somewhere that you assisted in the final appearance of the Wolf Man make-up. Can you recall any of the ideas that were used in the final draft?

**MR. CHANEY:** Your question, to answer truthfully, is entirely untrue. Mr. Jack Pierce, one of the finest make-up men who ever lived, did the entire make-up himself.

**PHOTON:** As an expert on make-up, what is your opinion of the late Jack F. Pierce, who did most of your horror film jobs?

**MR. CHANEY:** The answer to this can be found in the answer to the previous question.

**PHOTON:** Is there any type of film character role you have always wanted to do, but never had the chance to present?

**MR. CHANEY:** There has been no definite part that I ever wanted. All I wanted was a part, and the chance to take it home, study it and do the best I could with it. This often pays off, because many times I have started on a picture with one line in it for me, and by the time I got through figuring it out, making suggestions to the director, etc., I have ended up with the second lead! Never give up on exactly what you read, because there are always improvements you can make with your own thoughts.

**PHOTON:** Do you plan to continue making films, or is there another interest you are presently doing or are planning to embark upon?

**MR. CHANEY:** Yes, I certainly plan to continue making films. However, at the present time I have begun a "spare-time" occupation: the writing of books & motion picture scripts. The first of the books, **A Century of Chaney**, you know about. I plan to follow this with a biography and autobiography of my Dad and myself, respectively.

**PHOTON:** Do you feel that the film industry has been fair to you throughout the years?

**MR. CHANEY:** I certainly do. I think that the studios, producers and what-not have been fair and good to me. As you know, everyone makes mistakes, but overall, I have no complaints. It is my hope that the directors and producers that I have worked for, over the years, feel the same way about me.

**PHOTON:** Lastly, you have made it clear that you dislike the "Jr." on the end of your name. For those who do not know, could you explain why you have always disliked the trade name given to you? Do you recall the instigator of that name?

**MR. CHANEY:** I am most proud of the name **Lo Chaney**, because it was my father's and he was something to be proud of. I am not so proud of "**Lo Chaney, Jr.**", because they had to starve me to make me take this name. Any ability that I might have had is there - the name didn't change it - but it certainly changed the income. So, "**Junior**" is a thing like a stick on my shoulder that I'd like to knock off...and I'd be happier without.

**PHOTON:** Thank you so very much, Mr. Chaney, for generously taking the time to answer these questions for our readers.

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Tess Dodge and Shirley Harris are setting up a sine devoted to the horror and sci-fi genre, and a straight flicks like **MURDER ON THE MOUNTAIN**. All letters, articles and artwork will be considered for publication. Give your views on anything from **TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA** to **JOE**. Will try to pay for best cover artwork. **PLEASE SUBMIT!** 50¢ for the first issue; free copies to those whose work is published. Write to: T. L. Dodge / 2732 Santiago Road / Pullerton, Calif. 92631.  
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Wanted: Stills from Bela Lugosi films (especially **DRACULA**). Need stills & posters from early (1931-1945) Universal horror films. Send any price lists to: Charles W. Sauer / 5729 W. Henderson St. / Chicago, Ill. 60634.  
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Wanted: Stills, photoplays, scripts, lobby cards, magazine articles and trailers from **FANTASTIC VOYAGE** and **ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.** I especially need several different views of the submarine Proteus from **FANTASTIC VOYAGE**. Also, any old science fiction pulp magazines for sale. Write for prices to: Yvonne / 750 Bridge Street / Richmond, B.C. Canada.  
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Good Horror Mags For Sale: such as back issues of **Famous Monsters**, **Spacemen**, **Fantastic Monsters**, **Cosmic Frankenstein**, **Horror** & **Mad Monsters** and most others. Most all magazines are valuable,  
\*\*\*\*\*

long out-of-print editions in fine-to-mint condition. For a complete list, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Don Fellman / 6741 Kissena Blvd. / Flushing, N.Y. 11367.  
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Jerry Lacy, who has played four different characters named Trask on **DARK SHADOWS**, has a fan club which is run by Mrs. Gloria Lillibridge / 281 Centerville Rd. / Warwick, R.I. 02886. Annual dues are \$2.00 for which you receive a personally autographed photo, bi-monthly publication, etc.  
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#### NEXT ISSUE!

#### ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

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